



COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY

COURTHOUSE

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EMERGENCY DECLARATION

COVID-19

WHEREAS, the County Council of Talbot County, Maryland, has been advised by the Director of Emergency Management for Talbot County and the local Health Officer that COVID-19, a respiratory disease that spreads easily from person to person and may result in serious illness or death, is a public health catastrophe and a public safety emergency; and

WHEREAS, a Declaration of State of Emergency and Existence of a Catastrophic Health Emergency was declared by the Governor of the State of Maryland on March 5, 2020; and

WHEREAS, a Proclamation on Declaring a National Emergency Concerning the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak was issued by the President of the United States on March 13, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Talbot County was reported on March 15, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (“WHO”) and the Centers for Disease Control (“CDC”) has declared the COVID-19 outbreak a public health emergency of international concern that poses an immediate danger to public safety; and

WHEREAS, as the COVID-19 public health catastrophe and public safety emergency continues, it threatens lives, health and property in Talbot County, requiring Talbot County to call all of its resources into limited or long term activation; and

WHEREAS, State assistance may be needed to protect public peace, health and safety in Talbot County as well as the lives, health and property of the citizens of Talbot County pursuant to Title 14 of the Public Safety Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland; and

WHEREAS, resources are requested under applicable State and local emergency plans and may consist of personnel, equipment and use of facility space, as needed for this emergency to protect the public peace and safety of the citizens of Talbot County; and

WHEREAS, on March 12, 2020, the State of Maryland issued an Order extending certain licenses, permits, and registrations and authorizing suspension of legal time requirements for all licenses issued by any political subdivision of the State of Maryland, which would include Talbot County; and

WHEREAS, sitting as the Talbot County Board of Health, the County Council believes that certain rules and regulations related to County government operations are necessary to mitigate the COVID-19 disease and to protect the public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the County Council believes that such Order is prudent, due to the possibility of increased government employee absence and alternative working arrangements, and to reduce the need for the public to interact with government employees in person.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED, PROCLAIMED, AND DECLARED, by the County Council of Talbot County, Maryland that, in accordance with the authority granted by the Charter and Laws of Talbot County, Maryland, and pursuant to any and all authority vested to the Council by the Maryland Constitution and the Laws of Maryland, including but not limited to § 14-111 of the Public Safety Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and § 3-502 of the Health-General Article, **THAT A STATE OF EMERGENCY AND CATASTROPHIC HEALTH EMERGENCY EXISTS IN TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND, AND**

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED THAT:

1. Publication and Duration:

- a. This Emergency Declaration shall be promptly publicized.
- b. A copy of the Emergency Declaration be filed with the chief local records-keeping agency.
- c. This Emergency Declaration is effective for a period of 30 days. It is possible, however, that the state of emergency will continue for more than 30 days. In the event that an extension of this Declaration is necessary, the County Council, sitting as the governing body of the County, may consent to and extend such Declaration for additional periods of time as the Council deems necessary in accordance with Public Safety Article § 14-111.

2. Federal and State Aid: The County hereby requests and authorizes the receipt of all available Federal and State aid, resources, and assistance to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Talbot County pursuant to Title 14 of the Public Safety Article, Md. Code Ann., and in accordance with all applicable State and local emergency plans.

3. Emergency Powers and Appropriations: All emergency powers of the County Council and the County Manager under the Talbot County Charter and state law are hereby enabled, including but not limited to Section 617 of the Talbot County Charter related to emergency appropriations.

4. **Procurement:** All procurements and purchases needed to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak may be authorized in accordance with § IV of the Talbot County Procurement Policy, titled “Emergency Purchases.”
5. **Closure of Public Buildings:** Effective Tuesday, March 17, 2020, all Talbot County government buildings shall be closed to the public while this Declaration is in effect.
6. **Extension of Licenses:** The expiration date of any licenses, permits, registrations and professional licenses issued by Talbot County that would otherwise:
 - a. Expire by the later of (i) April 30, 2020 or (ii) the termination of the Governor’s state of emergency; and
 - b. Be renewable during such period noted in Paragraph 6.a. under applicable laws and regulations

is hereby extended to the later of (i) May 31, 2020, or (ii) within 30 days after the date by which the Governor’s state of emergency is terminated and the catastrophic health emergency is rescinded.
7. **Suspension of Deadlines:** The County Manager is hereby authorized, upon a finding that the suspension will not endanger the public health, welfare or safety, and after notification to the County Council, suspend the effect of any legal or procedural deadline, due date, time of default, time expiration, period of time or other time of an act or event described within any local statute, rule or regulation that Talbot County administers. Such suspension may, at the discretion of the County Manager, continue until no later than the 30th day after the date by which the Governor’s state of emergency is terminated and the catastrophic health emergency is rescinded.
8. **Board and Commission Meetings:** All Talbot County board and commission meetings are hereby suspended, subject to the following:
 - a. For any agenda item deemed critical by agreement of the board or commission chair and the County Manager and subject to available technology, the board or commission may hold a meeting to address such critical item, provided that the meeting shall be conducted virtually via teleconference, live streaming, or any other available technology that will allow, in the view of the County Attorney’s Office, the necessary parties to participate and the public to observe in real time to the extent required by law.
 - b. To the extent a board’s or commission’s rules of procedure require the presence of a physical quorum of the body to conduct business, such rule may be suspended upon concurrence by the County Attorney’s Office and subject to available technology allowing the body to communicate virtually in real time.
9. **County Council Meetings:** All Talbot County Council meetings are hereby suspended, subject to the following:

- a. For any future agenda item deemed critical by agreement of the Council chair and the County Manager and subject to available technology, the Council may hold a meeting to address such critical item, provided that the meeting shall be conducted virtually via teleconference, live streaming, or any other available technology that will allow, in the view of the County Attorney's Office, the necessary parties to participate and the public to observe in real time to the extent required by law.
- b. In the event that a physical quorum is not possible or advisable for such meeting, the requirement in the County Council Rules of Procedure for the presence of a physical quorum of the body to conduct business may be suspended by a four-fifths vote of the Council at such virtual meeting, upon concurrence by the County Attorney's Office and subject to available technology allowing the body to communicate virtually in real time.

10. Supersedes Inconsistent Local Law: This Emergency Declaration and the orders herein shall supersede any inconsistent or conflicting local law, rule, or regulation.

11. Further Amendments. This Emergency Declaration may be revised or amended from time to time as needed in the discretion of the County Council.

THIS DECLARATION IS HEREBY EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY this Sixteenth day of March in 2020.

GIVEN UNDER OUR HANDS AND THE GREAT SEAL OF TALBOT COUNTY, THIS 16th DAY OF MARCH IN THE YEAR 2020.

ADOPTED:

By the Council: March 16, 2020

Susan W. Moran

Susan Moran, Clerk of Council

Corey W. Pack, President

Chuck F. Callahan, Vice President

Frank Divilio

AYE via conference call participation

Pete Leshner

Laura E. Price