

2020-10
OKALOOSA COUNTY DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY
RECOVERY MEASURES RELATED TO COVID-19
(May 5, 2020 –Reopening of Beach Facilities and Activities)

WHEREAS, Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a severe acute respiratory illness that can spread among humans through respiratory transmission and other potential methods, and presents symptoms similar to those of influenza; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, issued a Proclamation on Declaring a National Emergency Concerning the Novel Coronavirus Disease Outbreak pursuant to section 501 (b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act; and

WHEREAS, Okaloosa County is threatened by COVID-19 because of the apparent ability of the virus to spread rapidly among humans, and COVID-19 thereby constitutes a clear and present threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens and visitors of Okaloosa County; and

WHEREAS, the CDC has issued guidelines for “community mitigation strategies” to limit the spread of COVID-19, including recommendations for social distancing, which has proven to be an effective method for containing COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order Number 20-52 declaring a state of emergency in the State of Florida; and

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2020, the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners (“Board”) declared a local state of emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Declaration of State of Emergency empowers the County with wide latitude allowing it to adopt any measure allowed by law that is in the best interest of the public’s health, safety and welfare; and

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2020, the Board adopted a Declaration of Emergency Protective Measures, closing public beaches, beach accessways, certain beach parking areas, beachfront parks, limited the use of the pier, and suspended beach vending permits and Crab Island vending permits; and

WHEREAS, on March 24, 2020, the Board adopted a Declaration of Emergency Protective Measures, closing all gulf-front beaches in Okaloosa County; and

WHEREAS, on April 1, 2020, Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order Number 20-91, Safer at Home Order, directing individuals to limit their movements and personal interactions to only those necessary to obtain or provide essential services or conduct essential activities; and

WHEREAS, data collected by the Florida Department of Health indicates the State has achieved several critical benchmarks in flattening the curve, including a downward trajectory of hospital visits for influenza-like illness and COVID-19-like syndromic cases, a decrease in percent positive test results, and a significant increase in hospital capacity since March 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Board further finds and determines that the COVID-19 pandemic is a fluid emergency situation which may require loosening or tightening restrictions based on the number of cases, hospitalizations, rates of infection, and limited resources of the County, Emergency Medical Personnel, Sheriff's Office, Florida Department of Health, and area medical providers; and

WHEREAS, section 252.46, Florida Statutes, permits political subdivisions of the state to make, amend, and rescind such orders and rules as are necessary for emergency management purposes and to supplement the carrying out of the provisions of sections 252.31-252.90, Florida Statutes.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of County Commissioners of Okaloosa County, Florida, does hereby declare and establish the following:

Section 1. Recitals.

1. The foregoing recitals are true and correct, and incorporated into this Declaration.

Section 2. Reopening of Certain Properties, Facilities and Permitting.

1. The following properties, facilities, and permitting is hereby reopened/reauthorized effective Saturday, May 9, 2020:
 - a. Gulf-front public and private beaches;
 - b. Beach accessways;
 - c. Parking areas solely for accessing the beaches;
 - d. County beachfront parks;
 - e. Marler Park;
 - f. The Pier;
 - g. Beach Vending;
 - h. Beach-related Permits – i.e. weddings limited to gather size restrictions
 - i. Crab Island Vending Permits, after the National Park Service issues vendors Commercial Use Authorizations; and
 - j. Public restrooms at these properties/facilities.
2. Individuals utilizing these properties, facilities and permits shall follow gathering restrictions and all other social distancing guidelines.

Section 3. Inconsistent and conflicting provisions superseded.

1. This Declaration shall supersede all inconsistent or conflicting Ordinances, Resolutions and Declarations.

PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED at a meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of Okaloosa County on the 5th day of May, 2020.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: _____
Robert A. "Trey" Goodwin III, Chairman

ATTEST:

By: _____
J. D. Peacock, II, Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

By: _____
Lynn M. Hoshihara
County Attorney