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May 20, 2020

The Honorable Halsey Beshears
Secretary, Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation
2601 Blair Stone Road
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1027

Re: Vacation Rentals for St. Lucie County

Dear Secretary Beshears:

As you are aware, tourism is a primary economic driver for the State of Florida and the industry has suffered greatly due to the impacts of COVID-19. These impacts have also affected St. Lucie County, which is comprised of the city of Fort Pierce, the city of Port St. Lucie and the beaches of Hutchinson Island. In addition to over 3,000 hotel / motel rooms, the County also has over 1,000 vacation rental properties including ocean-side condominiums and homes as well as a number of inland homes and golf villas that help drive sales tax revenue, tourist development tax revenue and create positive economic impacts to our communities.

To help St. Lucie County's recovery, I am kindly requesting that you support the reopening of short-term vacation rentals for St. Lucie County. Enclosed you will find the plan that I am recommending to reopen short-term vacation rentals in a responsible and safe manner – this plan is being submitted for your consideration and approval. We respectfully request expedited approval to facilitate the Memorial Day weekend, beginning Friday, May 22, 2020.

I am available to discuss this matter further and will provide any additional information you may need to approve our request. Thank you for your time, leadership and support to help our state and county recover.

Sincerely,



Howard N. Tipton
County Administrator

Enclosure

Cc: Board of County Commissioners
County Attorney
Tourist Development Council
Nick Mimms, City of Fort Pierce
Russ Blackburn, City of Port St. Lucie
Ron Parrish, Public Safety
Leslie Olsen, Planning & Development Services
Charlotte Bireley, Tourism

Fort Pierce • Port St. Lucie • Hutchinson Island



St. Lucie County Plan for Owners and Managers of Vacation Rentals

To allow short-term vacation rental reservations and the acceptance of arriving guests in St. Lucie County, beginning on Friday, May 22, 2020 the following plan will be implemented. **This plan may be updated and/or amended every two (2) weeks, as necessary.**

Occupancy

- Ten (10) person occupancy cap for vacation rental units.

Screening of Guests / Reservations

- Reservations and stays will be allowed from U.S. states with a COVID-19 Case Rate less than 700cases/100K residents as of May 18, 2020. (<https://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/index.html>)
 - Property owners and managers shall provide a weekly report to the St. Lucie County Tourism Office (first report due May 29, 2020) which includes name of owner or manager, address of rental property, all reservations (Arrival & Departure dates) and home zip codes of renters.
- Reservations from COVID-19 hot spots identified by the Governor are to be avoided for the next 30-45 days.
- In the event the Governor issues subsequent Orders addressing vacation rentals and/or "hot spots" in the U.S., those restrictions shall be incorporated into the plan.
- Reservations from international travelers will not be accepted.

Health and Safety of Guests

- Self or contactless check-ins and check-outs are encouraged to cut down on face-to-face interactions.
- [CDC resources](#) must be provided to any guest while staying on property. These resources are available in multiple languages on the CDC website.
- [CDC guidance](#) must be provided to guests traveling with pets and service/assistance animals if the property is pet-friendly.
- To inform guests, signage will be placed at each property highlighting the cleaning protocols between stays.
- Extra time must be allowed for enhanced cleaning procedures to take place between stays based upon the use of CDC cleaning and sanitization procedures.
- All properties must provide local COVID-19 guidance for guests. St. Lucie County has a dedicated webpage that includes local information at <https://www.stlucieco.gov/departments-services/a-z/public-safety/covid-19>

Cleanliness of the Property

- All Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) sanitation guidelines must be followed: [61C-3.001 Sanitation and Safety Requirements of the transient lodging statutes](#).
- [CDC related guidelines that are for public spaces, businesses, schools and homes](#) must be followed which expand upon the State of Florida and the Department of Business & Professional Regulation requirements for safety and sanitation for all lodging.
- Employees or contractors working in short-term rentals should be provided [CDC related safety guidance](#) to alleviate the transmission of the virus and provide further protection for employees and guests.
 - Employees or contractors shall be provided gloves and masks to be worn when interacting with the public.
 - Housekeeping personnel shall wear masks and gloves for each cleaning. If multiple members of the cleaning and/or rental staff are present at a property, they should practice social distancing and maintain at least 6 feet apart at all times, and wear masks and gloves.
 - All employees should have a wellness check upon arrival to work. The wellness check, at a minimum, will consist of a temperature check. Staff members who have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher will not be permitted to work.
- Pool decks and other common areas will be monitored for cleanliness and disinfected regularly.
- Upon exit, guests should be asked to turn on all ceiling fans and/or HVAC fans to facilitate air circulation.

Communications

County staff will conduct activities to educate owners and managers about this plan through scheduled webinars, social media, public relations, and other tactics to ensure that our community and its owners and managers can easily locate and understand the requirement of the plan.

This plan may be updated and/or amended every two (2) weeks, as necessary.