

Declaration of Local State of Disaster Due to a Public Health Emergency

Whereas, in December 2019, a respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus was detected in Wuhan County, Hubei Province, China. The virus has been named “SARS-CoV-2” and the disease it causes has been named “coronavirus disease 2019” (“COVID-19”). Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Outcomes have ranged from mild to severe illness, and in some cases death; and

Whereas, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization Director General declared the outbreak of COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and advised countries to prepare for the containment, including active surveillance, early detection, isolation and case management, contact tracing, and prevention of onward spread of the disease; and

Whereas, on January 31, 2020, the U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary declared a public health emergency for the United States to aid the nation’s healthcare community in responding to COVID-19; and **Whereas**, on March 13, 2020, Donald J. Trump, the President of the United States declared a National Disaster; and

Whereas, on March 13, 2020, Greg Abbott, Governor of the State of Texas declared a state of disaster throughout the state of Texas; and

Whereas the identification of “community spread” cases of COVID-19 in the United States could potentially signal that transmission of the virus may no longer be limited to travel to outbreak areas or contact with travelers who have visited outbreak areas; and

Whereas, according to the Center for Disease Control (“CDC”), it is likely that at some point, widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the United States will occur; and

Whereas, the CDC warns that widespread transmission of COVID-19 would translate into large numbers of people needing medical care at the same time; schools, childcare centers, workplaces, and other places for mass gatherings may experience more absenteeism; public health and healthcare systems may become overloaded with elevated rates of hospitalizations and deaths; other critical infrastructure, such as law enforcement, emergency medical services, and transportation industry may also be affected; and health care providers and hospitals may be overwhelmed; and,

Whereas, given, among other things, the CDC’s guidance, there is an ongoing risk and likelihood of COVID-19-positive patients being identified in the County of Victoria; and

Whereas, the County of Victoria’s Local Health Authority is taking steps to ensure the spread of COVID-19 is contained, the community is kept safe, and the exposure risk is minimized; and

Whereas, the County, including its Local Health Authority, Health Department, Office of Emergency Management, and other County partners, have been working successfully and diligently to implement CDC guidelines, but now require additional tools and resources to protect the public health given the current state of the epidemic and the need for a sustained response; and

Whereas, it is necessary to the public health of the residents of the County of Victoria and surrounding areas that those persons under investigation, persons under management, and quarantined persons remain within the confines of their homes or in safe, secure facilities during the quarantine period following their exposure to the virus; and


Whereas, pursuant to the Texas Disaster Act of 1975, as amended, Texas Government Code Annotated, Chapter 418, (the “Texas Disaster Act”), the County Judge is designated as the Emergency Management Director of the County of Victoria, and may exercise the powers granted to the Governor on an appropriate local scale; and

Whereas, a declaration of local disaster due to this public health emergency includes the ability to reduce the possibility of exposure to disease, control the risk, promote health, compel persons to undergo additional health measures that prevent or control the spread of disease, including isolation, surveillance, quarantine, or placement of persons under public health observation, including the provision of temporary housing or emergency shelters for persons misplaced or evacuated and request assistance from the Governor of state resources;

Now, therefore it be proclaimed by the Judge of Victoria County, Texas:

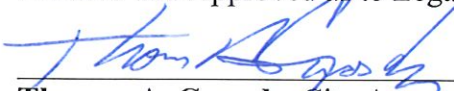
1. That a local state of disaster is hereby declared for the County of Victoria pursuant to §418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code.
2. Pursuant to §418.108(b) of the Texas Government Code, the state of disaster shall continue for a period of not more than seven days from the date of this declaration unless continued or renewed by the Commissioner’s Court of Victoria County.
3. Pursuant to §418.108(c) of the Texas Government Code, this declaration of a local state of disaster shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly with the County Clerk.
4. Pursuant to §418.108(d) of the Texas Government Code, this declaration of a local state of disaster activates the County/County emergency management plan.
5. That this proclamation shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance.

ORDERED this the 16th Day of March, 2020.



Ben Zeller, Judge of the County of Victoria

Attested and Approved as to Legal Form:



Thomas A. Gwosdz, City Attorney