

DECLARATION OF A DISASTER EMERGENCY FOR THE COUNTY OF LACKAWANNA, PENNSYLVANIA

WHEREAS, a novel corona virus (now known as SARS CoV-2) emerged in Wuhan, China, began infecting humans in December 2019, and has since spread throughout the world, including the United States; and

WHEREAS, SARS CoV2 is known to have the potential to cause Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) in humans; and

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) has declared COVID-19 a “public health emergency of international concern,” and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (“HHS”) Secretary has declared that COVID-19 creates a public health emergency; and

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

WHEREAS, the Governor’s office of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania issued a Proclamation of Disaster Emergency on March 6, 2020 due to COVID-19 under the authority of 35 Pa C.S. § 7101, *et seq.* that authorized the suspension of certain procedures and formalities prescribed by law and urged counties in the Commonwealth to “act as necessary to meet the current exigencies,” and

WHEREAS, emergency management measures are required to reduce the severity of this disaster and to protect the health, safety and welfare of affected residents in Lackawanna County; and

WHEREAS, Section 7501 of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Act (35 PA CSA §7501) authorizes the Lackawanna County to declare a disaster emergency “upon the finding a disaster has occurred or is imminent”; and

WHEREAS, Section 1.3-302(t) of the Lackawanna County Home Rule Charter authorizes the Board of Commissioners to make provisions for any matters of County Government involving health, safety, welfare or public emergency.

NOW THEREFORE, we, the undersigned Commissioners of Lackawanna County, pursuant to the provisions of §7501 of the Emergency Services Act and §1.3-302(t) of the Lackawanna County Home Rule Charter, do hereby declare the existence of an emergency in Lackawanna County due to COVID-19.

FURTHER, the Commissioners direct the Chief of Staff and the Lackawanna County Emergency Management Director to coordinate the County’s activities of the emergency response, to work with all state and federal authorities, to take all appropriate action needed to alleviate the effects of this disaster, to aid in the restoration of essential public services, and to take any other

emergency response action deemed necessary to respond to this emergency.

FURTHER, the Commissioners hereby create a Leadership Council to advise the Chief of Staff and County Emergency Services Director in response to COVID-19 that shall consist of the Board of Commissioners, the Chief of Staff, the County Emergency Services Director, the Human Resources Director, the Solicitor's Office, and any and all additional members as deemed necessary and appropriate by the Commissioners. This Leadership Council shall meet as needed in response to COVID-19 without the need to formally advertise times and places of meetings due to the exigent and evolving circumstances of this disaster, although, as time permits, every effort will be made to list the times and places of such meetings in advance on the County website.

FURTHER, the Board of Commissioners, pursuant to 35 Pa C.S. §7501(d), authorize the temporary suspension of all formal requirements in light of the exigencies of this disaster emergency, including all time-consuming procedures and formalities proscribed by law (excepting mandatory constitutional requirements) pertaining to the performance of public work, entering into contracts, the incurring of obligations, the employment of temporary workers, the rental of equipment, the purchase of supplies and materials, the levying of taxes and the appropriation and expenditure of public funds.

FURTHER, all non-essential hearings and meetings, including for boards, commissioners and authorities for purposes of official county business shall be cancelled during the period of this emergency declaration. For some meetings and hearings, arrangements for remote accommodations may be made and made available to attendees.

FURTHER, all county buildings shall remain open to the public for essential business, all members of the public are requested, and urged, to refrain from accessing them unless necessary.


FURTHER, all County residents, businesses, organizations and visitors are urged to abide during the period of the Emergency Declaration by the recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control, as well as guidance issued by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and to refrain from all unnecessary travel, gatherings, and business so as to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 and, in turn, this public health emergency.

AND FURTHERMORE, this Declaration shall remain in effect for a period of Thirty (30) days, or until rescinded or extended.

This Declaration shall take effect immediately.

Authorized this 16th day of March, 2020.

Lackawanna County Board of Commissioners:



Jerry Notarianni, Chair.



Debi Domenick



Chris Chermack

ATTESTED:



Brian Jeffers, Chief of Staff