



Northwest Arctic Borough

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UPDATE FROM THE MAYOR'S OFFICE

COVID-19 Update re Expiration of State Disaster Declaration

February 17, 2021

Greetings Northwest Arctic Borough (NWAB) Residents:

As many of you are aware, Governor Dunleavy's State disaster declaration expired on February 14, 2021, without legislative action to extend the declaration. Importantly, this does not mean that the Borough's emergency disaster declaration expired or that the Borough does not have the power to act to protect our region in the absence of the State's declaration. The NWAB Emergency Order-05 remains in full force and effect. On November 24, 2020, the Borough passed Resolution 20-84, which extended the Borough's disaster emergency declaration through April 30, 2021, unless otherwise terminated or modified.

The lapse of the State's disaster declaration resulted in the loss of tools and resources to fight the pandemic, including the loss of State authority to:

- Suspend state statutes, regulations, or orders if they impede or delay actions needed to deal with the disaster. It ended suspension of approximately 200 regulations, including telehealth expansion and virtual shareholder meetings.
- Trigger public health authority of Department of Health and Social Services in order to use all available state resources to deal with COVID-19.
- Implement mandates in order to meet the immediate and critical needs of the state to address the pandemic (including travel restrictions, etc.).
- Use private property needed to cope with the disaster. This immediately ended alternate care testing sites and vaccine sites like the Alaska Airlines Center in Anchorage.
- Order intrastate, interstate, and international travel requirements (testing, quarantine).
- Allocate resources, including medicine, vaccines, and supplies.

Please be reassured that the Northwest Arctic Borough and Unified Command Team members remain committed to both protecting our region from COVID-19 and not undoing the progress we have made to date. Getting vaccinated and remaining vigilant with adherence to local emergency orders is essential. Please continue to help keep our region safe. Quyanna!