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Extending Certain Licenses, Permits, Registrations, and Other Governmental Authorizations

AUTHORIZING SUSPENSION OF LEGAL TIME REQUIREMENTS, AND HANDLING OF ESSENTIAL GOVERNMENT BUSINESS OF COUNTY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND/OR COMMITTEES

Whereas, A state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency was proclaimed on March 5, 2020 by the Governor of the State of Maryland;

Whereas, A state of emergency was declared on March 13, 2020 by the County Executive of Baltimore County, Maryland to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within Baltimore County, and the state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency still exists;

Whereas, COVID-19, an infectious and contagious respiratory disease that spreads easily from person to person and may result in serious illness or death, is a public health catastrophe and at least three (3) cases have been confirmed in Baltimore County, Maryland;

Whereas, The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has advised employers, such as Baltimore County, Maryland, to prepare for increased employee absence and possible alternative working arrangements (such as teleworking) in response to an outbreak of COVID-19;

Whereas, Increased employee absence and alternative working arrangement within Baltimore County's workforce may impact the County's ability to timely process renewals of expiring permits, licenses, registrations, and other governmental authorizations;

Whereas, The outbreak of COVID-19 may significantly disrupt access to or the operations of one or more of Baltimore County's Boards, Commissions and/or Committees;

Whereas, The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Maryland Department of Health recommend social distancing to reduce the spread of COVID-19;

Whereas, Renewal of expiring permits, licenses, registrations, and other governmental authorizations to enter public buildings and interact with County employees and other persons, which may be contrary to prudent social distancing;

Whereas, The conducting of public business by County boards, committees and commissions often require members of those boards, committees and commissions as well, as members of the public, to enter public buildings and interact with County employees and other persons, which may be contrary to prudent social distancing;

Whereas, To reduce the threat to human health caused by the transmission of COVID-19, and to protect and save lives, it is necessary and reasonable that permits, licenses, registration, and other governmental authorizations be extended until after the state of emergency has ended;

Whereas, To the extent possible, County boards, commissions and committees have remained operational and provided scheduled and required events while seeking to balance the health and safety needs of County personnel, members of the boards, commissions and committees, and the public;

Whereas, To reduce the threat to human health caused by the transmission of COVID-19, it is necessary during the state of emergency to postpone all non-essential meetings, programming and events of County boards, commissions and committees; and

Whereas, To reduce the threat to human health caused by the transmission of COVID-19, it is necessary to prohibit the public from attending, in-person, all hearings of County boards, commissions and committees deemed necessary for essential government business so as to exercise prudent social distancing, but to provide alternative means for public to have the best possible opportunity to observe essential government business of County boards, commissions and/or committees;

Now, therefore, I, John A. Olszewski, Jr., County Executive of Baltimore County, Maryland, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Section 3-1-504 of the Baltimore County Code, and in an effort to Control and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within Baltimore County, Maryland do hereby order that:

I. The foregoing Executive Order applies to all licenses, permits, registrations, and other authorizations issued by Baltimore County, Maryland or any department or agency of the County (collectively, the "Covered Authorizations"), that would otherwise:

1. expire during the state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency; and
2. be renewable during the state of emergency and public health catastrophe under applicable laws and regulations.

II. The expiration date of each Covered Authorization is hereby extended to the 30th day after the date by which the state of emergency is terminated and the catastrophic health emergency is rescinded.

III. As to suspension of legal time requirements:

1. The head of each unit or agency of Baltimore County, Maryland may, upon a finding that the suspension will not endanger the public health, welfare of safety, and after notification to the County Executive,

suspend the effect of any legal or procedural deadline, due date, time of default, time expiration, period of time, or other statute, rule or regulation that it administers. This applies to suspensions concerning payments of late fees owed to Baltimore County. The unit or agency head shall provide reasonable public notices of any suspensions.

2. Such suspension may, at the discretion of the unit or agency director and to the extent that it will not endanger public health, welfare, or safety, continue until no later than 30th day after the date by which the state of emergency is terminated and the public health catastrophe is deemed over.

IV. Business of County Boards, Commissions and/or Committees

1. All non-essential meetings, programming and events of County boards, commissions and committees are hereby postponed until the state of emergency is terminated.
2. All hearings for County boards, commissions and/or committees which are deemed necessary for essential government business shall, to the extent possible, continue to be scheduled and heard, either in-person or remotely. However, members of the public shall be prohibited from attending any hearings for County boards, commissions and/or committees that are conducted in-person. However, guidance is to be provided by the County Attorney to allow members of the public the best possible opportunity to observe in-person hearings remotely.
3. For hearings of County boards, commissions and/or committees that are to be held remotely rather than in-person, guidance is to be provided by the County Attorney that will allow members of the public the best possible opportunity to observe such hearings.

V. The effect of any statute, rule or regulation of any agency of Baltimore County, Maryland inconsistent with this Order is hereby suspended.

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