STATE OF CONNECTICUT

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

NED LAMONT

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 7HH

PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND RESPONSE – MUNICIPAL BUDGET ADOPTION, COMMON-INTEREST COMMUNITY MEETINGS

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, I issued a declaration of public health and civil preparedness emergencies, proclaiming a state of emergency throughout the State of Connecticut as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in the United States and Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to such declaration, I have issued thirty-four (34) executive orders to suspend or modify statutes and to take other actions necessary to protect public health and safety and to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that spreads easily from person to person and may result in serious illness or death; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 is higher for individuals who are 60 or older and for those who have chronic health conditions; and

WHEREAS, to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) recommend implementation of community mitigation strategies to increase slow transmission of the virus, including cancellation of gatherings of ten people or more and social distancing in smaller gatherings; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 7-405 of the Connecticut General Statutes, municipalities are required to adopt budgets for the July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021 fiscal year by June 30th, and public town-meetings and referendums usually take place in May, during a period when the risk of spreading COVID-19 posed by large gatherings is expected to remain high; and

WHEREAS, the close contact and high attendance required for in-person voting in large numbers increases the risk of transmission of COVID-19 for voters, town officials, and poll workers and will consume a significant quantity of critically needed personal protective equipment; and

WHEREAS, the circumstances of in-person meetings or votes by members of common-interest communities may pose the same risks of transmission of COVID-19 as those posed by public votes on municipal budgets, requiring flexibility for the governing bodies of such communities to take measures to make decisions that eliminate or reduce such risks;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, NED LAMONT, Governor of the State of Connecticut, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Connecticut, do hereby **ORDER AND DIRECT:**

1. **Clarification of Executive Order No. 7I, Section 13 - Mandatory Suspension of In-Person Voting Requirements by Members of the Public on Municipal Budgets.** Executive Order No. 7I, Section 13 shall be deemed to require the budget-making authority of every municipality to adopt a budget for the July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021 fiscal year and to set a mill rate sufficient, in addition to the other estimated yearly income of such town and in addition to such revenue surplus, if any, as may be appropriated, not only to pay the expenses of the municipality for said fiscal year, but also to absorb the revenue deficit of such town, if any, at the beginning of said fiscal year using the procedures set forth therein, and to suspend any requirement for a vote on such budgets or mill rates by residents, electors, or property owners, including, but not limited to, any vote by annual town meeting or referendum. All conditions precedent to any such adoption, including without limitation, public notices, hearings, or presentations, shall proceed in a manner as closely consistent with the applicable statutes, special acts, town charters, municipal ordinances, resolutions or procedures as possible, and in compliance with the open meeting provisions set forth in Executive Order No. 7B. Nothing in this order shall invalidate or repeal the results of any vote on a budget or tax rate held by annual town meeting or referendum before the effective date of this order.

2. **Allowance of Use of Remote Meeting and Voting Procedures for Common Interest Ownership Association.** To protect the public health and limit transmission of COVID-19, Sections 47-250 and 47-252 are modified to provide that any common interest ownership association and any executive board or committee thereof may conduct any meeting, election, or vote by telephonic, video, or other conferencing process, or by ballot without a meeting, in accordance with Sections 47-250(a)(5), 47-250(b)(7), and/or 47-252(d) notwithstanding any prohibition or limitation in its declaration or bylaws.

Unless otherwise specified herein, this order shall take effect immediately and remain in effect for the duration of the public health and civil preparedness emergency, unless earlier modified, extended or terminated.

Dated at Hartford, Connecticut, this 1st day of May, 2020.

Ned Lamont
Governor

By His Excellency's Command

Denise W. Merrill
Secretary of the State