Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of the Governor

Executive Order

NUMBER FIFTY-ONE (2020)

DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY
DUE TO NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Importance of the Issue

The Commonwealth of Virginia is monitoring an outbreak of a respiratory illness referred to as the coronavirus (COVID-19), which has spread from Wuhan, Hubei Province, China to more than 80 other locations internationally, including the Commonwealth. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) has been working with local, state, and federal officials, healthcare and emergency management experts, and various state agencies to form a COVID-19 Taskforce to prepare for and respond to this threat. Given recent confirmed occurrences of COVID-19 within the Commonwealth and in neighboring states, as well as information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is anticipated that the disease will spread.

Therefore, on this date, March 12, 2020, I declare that a state of emergency exists in the Commonwealth of Virginia to continue to prepare and coordinate our response to the potential spread of COVID-19, a communicable disease of public health threat. The anticipated effects of COVID-19 constitute a disaster as described in § 44-146.16 of the *Code of Virginia* (*Code*). By virtue of the authority vested in me by Article V, Section 7 of the Constitution of Virginia, by §§ 44-146.17 and 44-75.1 of the *Code,* as Governor and Director of Emergency Management and Commander-in-Chief of the Commonwealth's armed forces, I proclaim a state of emergency. Accordingly, I direct state and local governments to render appropriate assistance to prepare for this event, to alleviate any conditions resulting from the situation, and to implement recovery and mitigation operations and activities so as to return impacted areas to pre-event conditions as much as possible. Emergency services shall be conducted in accordance with § 44-146.13 *et seq*. of the *Code.*

In order to marshal all public resources and appropriate preparedness, response, and recovery measures, I order the following actions:

A. Implementation by state agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan, as amended, along with other appropriate state plans.

B. Activation of the Virginia Emergency Operations Center and the Virginia Emergency Support Team, as directed by the State Coordinator of Emergency Management, to coordinate the provision of assistance to state, local, and tribal governments and to facilitate emergency services assignments to other agencies.

C. Authorization for the heads of executive branch agencies, on behalf of their regulatory boards as appropriate, and with the concurrence of their Cabinet Secretary, to waive any state requirement or regulation, and enter into contracts without regard to normal procedures or formalities, and without regard to application or permit fees or royalties. All waivers issued by agencies shall be posted on their websites.

D. Activation of § 59.1-525 *et seq.* of the *Code* related to price gouging.

E. Activation of the Virginia National Guard to State Active Duty.

F. Authorization of a maximum of $10,000,000 in state sum sufficient funds for state and local government mission assignments and state response and recovery operations authorized and coordinated through the Virginia Department of Emergency Management allowable by The Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. § 5121 *et seq*. Included in this authorization is $1,000,000 for the Department of Military Affairs, if it is called to State Active Duty.

Effective Date of this Executive Order

This Executive Order shall be effective March 12, 2020, and shall remain in full force and in effect until June 10, 2020 unless sooner amended or rescinded by further executive order. Termination of this Executive Order is not intended to terminate any federal type benefits granted or to be granted due to injury or death as a result of service under this Executive Order.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 12th day of March, 2020.

Ralph S. Northam, Governor

Attest:

Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth