STATE OF ALASKA
DECLARATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH DISASTER EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified COVID-19, a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death, which is a new strain of coronavirus not previously identified in humans, as posing a significant public health risk;

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization designated the initial outbreak of COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern;

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2020, United States Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II declared a public health emergency for the United States to aid the nation's healthcare community in responding to COVID-19;

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, I declared a Public Health Disaster Emergency due to the imminent threat of a COVID-19 outbreak in Alaska;

WHEREAS, on April 9, 2020, President Donald J. Trump approved a major disaster declaration for the State of Alaska to aid in COVID-19 recovery efforts;

WHEREAS, on November 16, 2020, I declared a Public Health Disaster Emergency due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Alaska, including over 17,000 confirmed cases, and 84 deaths from COVID-19;

WHEREAS, on December 10, 2020, Alaska had over 36,000 confirmed cases of, and 145 deaths from, COVID-19, and these numbers are expected to increase; and hospitals are nearing capacity statewide;

Whereas on December 11, 2020, the Food and Drug Administration issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)to begin an immediate nationwide distribution of the Pfizer vaccination. Alaska is expected to receive thousands of vaccinations beginning the week of December 14, 2020. This disaster declaration is necessary to facilitate and coordinate the receipt and distribution of this vaccine across Alaska.

WHEREAS, Alaska is at a critical point in the pandemic; case counts continue to rise; vaccines are expected to become available within 30 days of this Disaster Declaration; and the emergency response permitted by this declaration, pursuant to AS 26.23.020, is critical to the successful distribution of a vaccine across Alaska;

WHEREAS, a statewide response under Alaska Statute 18.15.390, coordinated by the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), is needed to fully address this condition of public health importance;

WHEREAS, on December 10, 2020, the Commissioner of DHSS certified that an increased outbreak of COVID-19 is occurring in Alaska due to widespread community transmission, in accordance with Alaska Statute 26.23.900(2)(E);

THEREFORE, under the authority granted by Alaska Statute 26.23.020(c), I hereby declare that a condition of public health disaster emergency exists, and this condition is of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant a public health disaster emergency declaration in order to provide assistance. Health orders are being issued with this declaration to minimize impact of the virus statewide, and continue effective healthcare treatment of Alaskans.

FURTHER, the Commissioners of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) and DHSS are hereby authorized to use funds made available for these purposes that are considered necessary for public health disaster assistance and response.

FURTHER, anticipated spending for this disaster: $1,000,000 from the Disaster Relief Fund pursuant to Alaska Statute 26.23.020(i); CARES Act and other funding appropriated for this fiscal year to respond to, and mitigate the risk arising from, a COVID-19 outbreak.

FURTHER, the Commissioner of the DMVA is authorized to delegate tasks to other State departments and agencies in accordance with the State Emergency Operations Plan. The Commissioner of DHSS is authorized to exercise the provisions provided under Alaska Statute 18.15.390(1)-(12).

This Declaration of Public Health Disaster Emergency is effective at 12:00 a.m. on December 16, 2020, and will expire at 12:00 a.m. on January 15, 2021, unless extended by further action of the Legislature.

Dated: 12/15/20

By: _____
Mike Dunleavy
Governor