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Office of the Governor

April 3, 2020

Dear Directors, Executive Directors & Administrators:

Just a few weeks ago, my newly established subcabinet groups began the hard work of meeting and formulating the means and ways to successfully implement my vision of a child and family centered Nevada government. In just a short period of time, we saw agencies working together, using their shared expertise to reach a unified goal, and breaking down the silos that plague every organization of this size. My staff and I observed a refreshing optimism and an invigoration of ideas that was carrying us through as we worked towards these focused priorities and toward a new and optimistic budget.

Unfortunately, the unimaginable has happened, and the magnitude of the COVID-19 public health crisis could not have been anticipated. Since my inauguration, I've welcomed honesty in your advice and expertise. Now, I will be honest with you.

We are headed into a new reality and need to take a different direction with our state budget that reflects this reality. One does not have to be a statistician or budget analyst to know that government budgets are taking significant hits as actual revenue will not meet our previous projected revenue expectations. That is why I have asked the Governor's Finance Office to send you the attached direction to begin that hard process of working together with your Governor's Finance Office budget analyst to jointly review your respective budgets and make recommendations for budget reserves. In this unprecedented and unfortunate situation, we need to make these difficult decisions together.

My direction to my staff and the Governor's Finance Office is that we will be surgical and thoughtful in our approach to this problem. While we must have percentage targets to start this process, we will not just simply make a strict percentage cut across the board to our budgets. I believe to do so would be a disservice to the citizens of Nevada. All budgetary decisions made in the coming weeks and months will be made with an eye toward prioritizing our state resources to protect the health and safety of our citizens and to get us on the path toward a healthy recovery, both physically and economically.

We cannot - *and I will not* - cut the budgets of those agencies that provide the necessary resources for those on the front lines of the COVID-19 response. This moment in history is unique as this is a public health crisis of a magnitude that Nevadans have never seen. We must prioritize our resources so that we can effectively address, mitigate, and resolve this crisis as soon as possible and return to social and economic normalcy. We cannot accomplish this mandate if we cut the vital areas needed to execute an effective COVID-19 response.

I wish we weren't facing the reality of this crisis, and I wish I didn't have to write this letter. However, as all Nevadans – including family households, small businesses, and even our largest employers – are looking at their finances and budgets differently right now, so should the State of Nevada. All Nevadans will be making cuts to their budgets, and we need to as well.

I know it is an all too familiar exercise for many of you to be asked to review your budgets for recommendations to remove resources, contract desired expansions, and set aside planned improvements all in the vein of shared sacrifices. In the little over a year since taking office, my staff and I have seen ample evidence of the extraordinary ideas and vision you have as state leaders, and it saddens me to ask you to postpone some of those aspirations for the time being. However, it is my hope that we can learn from this challenge and build a new paradigm so that we will come out stronger on the other end and get back to that work of building the state government that I have envisioned – one that is centered on the needs of the children, families and communities of Nevada.

Sincerely,

Governor Steve Sisolak
State of Nevada