FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: 3/27/2020

SUBJECT: Exercising Authority to Act to Protect Del Norte County Citizens and Minimize the Effects of the COVID-19 Emergency

Del Norte County, by Declaration dated March 17, 2020 and ratified by the Board of Supervisors on March 20, 2020, declared a Local Health Emergency in Del Norte County to help ensure adequate capacity to address the imminent threat of a community transmission phase of COVID-19 to citizens of Del Norte County.

Further, the Governor of the State of California declared a State of Emergency for the entire state on March 4, 2020 finding that COVID-19 has created a threat to public health and safety, and the President of the United States signed a proclamation declaring a national emergency concerning the COVID-19 outbreak on March 13, 2020.

Local, state and national public health agencies have instituted guidelines, recommendations and actions to curb the spread of the disease in an attempt to “flatten the curve” of the disease’s progression in the United States. Many of those recommendations have been adopted by States and local governments across the country.

By way of Executive Order N-33-20, the Governor has directed all individuals living in the State of California to stay home or at their place of residence except as needed to maintain continuity of operations of the federal critical infrastructure sectors, as outlined at https://www.cisa.gov/identifying-critical-infrastructure-during-covid-19.

The implementation of the Governor’s social distancing order and public campaigns have not proven effective as significant out of county visitors have continued to come to the Coast in recent days despite the stay at home order/directive. Repeated instances of violation of the social distancing norms have placed county resources and residents at much greater risk of the spread of the virus. Closure of short term rentals to our north threaten to increase visits to Del Norte County if no action is taken, in violation of the above-referenced shelter-in-place orders.

The Del Norte County Local Health Officer confirms that continued influxes of visitors, turning over on a short term basis, increases the likelihood of the spread of the coronavirus more than longer term tenancies and threatens the limited health care resources available in Del Norte County and therefore recommend the County consider temporarily limiting short term visitors to the County until the crisis ends.

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority of the Health Officer of the County of Del Norte, it is hereby ORDERED that:

1. County parks are closed to camping except for camp hosts or other persons expressly authorized by the County for stays 30 days or longer until the emergency ends.
2. All short term rentals, defined as the provision of sleeping accommodations in exchange for compensation for a duration of less than 30 days per guest, in any lodging house (as defined in Section 445 of Chapter 4 of Title 20 to the Del Norte County Code) or other use of any residential dwelling to provide accommodations for guests in exchange for compensation, including vacation rental dwellings or homestay lodgings, are prohibited in Del Norte County until the declared emergency ends or this prohibition is otherwise ended or modified by separate Order, whichever occurs first.

3. The use of any hotels and motels, RV Parks and Private Campgrounds, and similar lodgings or housing not identified above shall not provide sleeping accommodations to any person for a period less than 30 days, except as follows:
   a. Stays for 30 days or longer are allowed.
   b. Local county residents effecting a COVID-19 self-quarantine or who have moved from their local residence in order to allow a family member or roommate to self-quarantine in their local residence.
   c. Families or an individual residing in lodging for less than 30 days if the lodging accommodations are their only means of shelter, including, but not limited to, individuals receiving vouchers for lodging provided by local or regional governments or nonprofit agencies.
   d. Employees of the lodging facility, provided lodging is a requirement or benefit of their employment.
   e. Patients or families of patients receiving medical care at local facilities, persons providing essential services including but not limited to doctors, nurses, other health staff, home and health care workers, Coast Guard members, truck drivers and supply providers, workers in the County whose employer pays for lodging, construction workers on local projects (including public contractors), utility crews, and other persons whose work in the County requires temporary accommodations.
   f. Patients or their families and/or essential service workers as described above who have been encouraged or directed to isolate or quarantine by the Del Norte County Public Health Department.

4. All pools, spas and other public bathing facilities shall remain closed to the public at any lodging properties (including, but not limited to, hotels and motels, RV Parks and Private Campgrounds) for the duration of this Order, and each owner shall implement appropriate social distancing rules.

5. For any person lodged pursuant to any exception listed in paragraph 3, above, the owner or manager of each property shall keep a log of each excepted stay, including the name and contact information of the lodger(s) and the dates of stay. The log shall be made available upon request to city and county officials.

6. This Order takes effect Friday, March 27, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. Property owners and managers of properties effected by paragraphs 1-5, above, shall take all reasonable steps to terminate current occupancy of any guests not exempted herein by no later than 12:00 (noon) on Monday, March 30, 2020, but in no event shall any property owner or manager extend the stay of any current guest beyond their current stay expiration date. No new occupancies in violation of this Order may be rented effective 8:00 a.m. Tuesday March 31, 2020.

7. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, and to the maximum extent provided under State law, any person who violates this order shall be subject to an immediate suspension of any and all permits that authorize the use of the property as an accommodation for lodgers for one (1) year from the date of suspension.

8. This Order may be modified, rescinded or extended by authority of the County Public Health Officer in consultation with the County of Del Norte.

NOW, THEREFORE,

I, Warren Rehwaldt, Public Health Officer for the County of Del Norte, does declare this a Local Health Emergency shall be deemed to exist throughout Del Norte County as prescribed by state law, ordinances, and resolutions of this county.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that all citizens, organizations, and establishments follow orders and guidance related to COVID-19 as established by Federal Government and State of California public health authorities.

Warren Rehwaldt, Public Health Officer