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HUNTINGTON BEACH SET TO CHALLENGE THE GOVERNOR'S ORDER TO CLOSE ALL ORANGE COUNTY BEACHES

In response to Governor Newsom's announcement earlier today directing the hard closure of all beaches in Orange County, the Huntington Beach City Council voted tonight to pursue a legal challenge against the State's beach closure order.

"Governor Newsom's mandate to close all beaches in Orange County today was a jarring decision that significantly impacts us here in Huntington Beach," said Mayor Lyn Semeta. "Given that Orange County has among the lowest per-capita COVID-19 death rates in California, the action by the State prioritizes politics over data, in direct contradiction of the Governor's stated goal to allow science and facts to guide our response to this horrible global pandemic."

In response to the Governor's Orange County beach closure order (see attached letter), the Huntington Beach City Council voted 5-2 (with Council Member Kim Carr and Council Member Barbara Delgleize dissenting) to direct the City Attorney to pursue any and all legal actions necessary to challenge the State's beach closure directive.

Out of concern for being the only Orange County city with beaches still open, Huntington Beach will be closing all beaches starting May 1, including the City's bike paths, boat ramps, restrooms, parking lots, and associated recreational amenities. In addition, activities such as sunbathing, walking, running, and watersports will be prohibited.

Prior to the issuance of the Governor's directive, the City had been following the State's Stay-at-Home Order guidelines, and had invested considerable effort and expense in order to discourage overcrowding while facilitating effective social distancing at our beaches. In this way, the City was attempting to provide the community with the ability to safely experience the physical and mental health benefits associated with accessing the Pacific Ocean. Our experience locally had been that most people were being responsible and complying with social distancing requirements.

For more information about City updates and services during the COVID-19 pandemic, please call our City Service Call Center at (714) 536-5511, or visit our HB Ready website at www.HBready.com. A comprehensive resource list to support our community during this time is available, along with other tips and tools to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

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Lyn Semeta, Mayor
Jill Hardy, Mayor Pro Tem
Patrick Brenden, Council Member
Kim Carr, Council Member
Barbara Delgleize, Council Member
Erik Peterson, Council Member
Mike Posey, Council Member
Huntington Beach City Council

2000 Main Street
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

City Council Members:

Thank you for your ongoing leadership protecting Orange County communities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Governor's March 19, 2020 Executive Order EO-N-33 directs all residents to heed current State public health directives to preserve public health and safety. Current State public health directives prohibit gatherings of any size and direct residents to stay home unless participating in essential workforce activities or authorized necessary activities. As explained [here](#), among other things: "Californians can walk, run, hike and bike in their local neighborhoods as long as they continue to practice social distancing of 6 feet." These restrictions are in place and are necessary to protect all Californians from the spread of COVID-19.

Last weekend, state and local beaches in Orange County experienced exceptionally heavy visitation that generated a high concentration of beach visitors in close physical proximity. State public health leadership reviewed conditions on these beaches and determined that this beach visitation created unsafe conditions. These conditions threaten the health of both beach visitors and community members who did not visit the beach but are threatened by worsening spread of the virus, including first responders and health care providers.

In response, our State Department of Parks and Recreation is shifting to full closure of all Orange County State Beaches on a temporary basis. These beach

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closures will take effect tomorrow morning, May 1. Additionally, beaches operated by local governments in Orange County are directed to institute full closure starting tomorrow, May 1, to restrict the gathering of visitors that create unsafe conditions. Full closure means that there is no public access to these beaches on a temporary basis to protect public health. All restrooms are closed, and there are no parking facilities open for visitors, or recreational boats. No activities are permitted on the beach (including sunbathing, walking or running or watersports).

We understand that many Californians are eager to spend time and recreate outdoors given the public health crisis necessitating the state's Stay-at-Home Order. We continue to encourage residents to spend time outdoors in their neighborhoods and local parks that remain open for activities while maintaining safe physical distance. Additionally, we are hopeful and confident that we can collaborate with local Orange County leaders to identify measures that can restore safe beach access as soon as possible. But until such time as those measures are in place, this additional step to preserve public health and safety has proven essential.

This is a critical moment in California's battle against COVID-19, and Californians have stepped up to limit the spread of the virus. Temporary beach closures in Orange County will help to ensure continued progress on limiting spread of the virus, which will expedite our process to restore important activities within our economy and communities.

Thank you very much for your ongoing collaboration and leadership during this critical time.

Sincerely,



MARK S. GHILARDUCCI
Director, Governor's Office of Emergency Services



WADE CROWFOOT
Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency

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cc: Don Barnes, Orange County Sheriff-Coroner
Kirsten Monteleone, Dana Point Chief of Police
Robert Handy, Huntington Beach Chief of Police
Laura Farinella, Laguna Beach Chief of Police
Jon T. Lewis, Newport Beach Chief of Police
Edward Manhart, San Clemente Chief of Police
Philip L. Gonshak, Seal Beach Chief of Police
Senator Patricia Bates
Senator John Moorlach
Senator Tom Umberg
Assemblymember William Brough
Assemblymember Cottie Petrie Norris
California Coastal Commission



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