



COUNTY OF LAKE

Board of Supervisors

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PRESS RELEASE **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Facing and Seeing Beyond the COVID-19 Crisis

County Insights from Moke Simon, Chair of the Board of Supervisors

LAKE COUNTY, CA (April 15, 2020) – COVID-19 response was again a major topic at Tuesday's meeting of the Lake County Board of Supervisors. In harmony with Governor Newsom's later message of Tuesday afternoon, the update from Lake County's Public Health Officer, Gary Pace, MD, MPH, was ultimately forward-looking, and even hopeful vigilant action on the part of County residents to continue Sheltering-in-Place now, suppressing spread of the virus, will facilitate reintroduction of some business and other activities currently prohibited in the coming months.

Moke Simon, Chair of the Board of Supervisors, took time to offer insights on the County's COVID-19 response, and the need to remain vigilant at this time.

"I have to start by saying how grateful I am to every resident for the steps you have taken to limit the impact of COVID-19 in our communities," stated Simon. "This has been a broad team effort, and everyone has played a role. Thank you."

"This is not the time to let up, though," Simon continued. "Our local health officials, Sheriff Martin, all of our Emergency Operations team, and many County, City and community leaders continue to guide our response, and we need to support their work as we transition to a new phase of this crisis by continuing to stay home, and observing all recommended precautions."

Dr. Pace advised on Tuesday he would be assembling a Working Group this week, to look at areas of our local economy we may be able to reopen in the coming weeks, with appropriate precautions in place, as the May 3 end date of the current Shelter-in-Place Order approaches. Pace called for a coordinated and regional approach, noting Lake County is, "Isolated, but close to the Bay Area," where viral activity has been markedly greater, and expressed concern actions such as fully opening up Clear Lake to visitors could substantially increase risk of a surge in local cases.

Activities with the "highest social benefit" and lowest health risk are likely to come back first, and Pace noted "large group gatherings," such as concerts, music festivals and "large religious gatherings" carry greater health risks, and will be slower to return.

District 5 Supervisor, Rob Brown, highlighted the fact the Blue Collar Committee (BCC), a group of local business leaders, had begun work to prepare for potential reopening of local businesses weeks ago, and creative solutions that had already emerged from this group could give a jump start to Pace's own efforts. With strong endorsements from Brown and District 2 Supervisor, Bruno Sabatier, the Board unanimously appointed District 3 Supervisor, Eddie Crandell, a fellow founding BCC member, to carry the input

of the business community. Chairman Simon was likewise appointed to the Working Group.

“As both Dr. Pace and Governor Newsom mentioned yesterday, any [reinstatement of activities] will have to be done with [serious consideration of the risks], or we could see further surges that overwhelm our healthcare systems,” cautioned Simon. “People’s lives and well-being are at stake, and [infection rates and other public health indicators] will determine what we are able to do. Testing capacity, contact tracing, and other measures, like use of face coverings, will be key, as well.”

The Board also authorized temporary Sunday closures for the Eastlake Landfill, located at 16015 Davis Ave in Clearlake.

Eastlake Landfill will remain open from Monday-Saturday, 7:30am-3pm.

Public Services Director, Lars Ewing, indicated these temporary Sunday closures are driven by three primary factors: workforce shortages; increased operational demands due to COVID-19 precautions and increased involvement with recyclables; and relatively limited landfill utilization by the public on Sundays.

“We appreciate the precautions employees at Eastlake Landfill are taking, and the way they’ve stepped up with recent closure of the South Lake Refuse and Recycling Drop Off Center,” affirmed Simon. “For now, Sunday closures will allow them to work smarter, and meet the needs of the moment.”

In other business, the Board authorized a Letter of Support, addressed to the Small Business Administration, encouraging eligibility for various federal COVID-19 relief funding streams for Tribal entities and their employees. Seven Tribal Nations are historically associated with Lake County, and they collectively employ many hundreds of County residents, and comprise critical pillars of Lake County’s hospitality and entertainment industries, both of which have been severely affected. Supervisors Simon and Crandell, Chairs of Middletown and Robinson Rancherias, respectively, recused themselves from consideration of the item.

Supervisor Brown sponsored the item, citing issues of basic fairness; why should workers be precluded from protections afforded by the federal government, such as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), because they happen to work for a Tribal entity? Brown remarked during the meeting, “It makes no difference to me who [employees affected by COVID-19] work for, they should be supported,” and further observed, “[Employees] need to know they will still have a job at the end of this.”

Asked if there was anything further he would like to share with the public, Simon was reflective:

“When we adopted Vision 2028, our Board accepted a mandate from local residents to lead by facing and seeing beyond Lake County’s immediate challenges. While we had not specifically anticipated Public Safety Power Shutoffs or a global pandemic with the profound disruptions brought by COVID-19 when long-term planning conversations began, those are precisely the type of events that demand strong and visionary leadership at the local level.

“I hope the public knows local health officials and the members of our Board are partnering with leaders at all governmental levels and many others in Lake County’s communities to appropriately respond.”

Live video of all Board of Supervisors meetings, including Dr. Pace's valuable weekly COVID-19 updates, is accessible through the County website and Lake County PEG TV (TV8). Agendas, including instructions for participating in Board meetings via Zoom, and live and archived video are available at:
<https://countyoflake.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

To comment on any Board of Supervisors Agenda Item, write to the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors by 4pm the day before the meeting, PublicComment@lakecountyca.gov.

Lake County-focused COVID-19 information is accessible through the County's homepage, <http://www.lakecountyca.gov/>, and at <http://health.co.lake.ca.us/>.

If you have public health-related questions about COVID-19, please direct them to MHOAC@lakecountyca.gov, or call Public Health's COVID-19 line, at 707-263-8174.