

## Governor's meeting with the Legislature and Media Press Conference 3/27/20

### COVID-19, Unemployment, State/Federal Resources, Business Loans, H2A Workers, Presidential Primaries

#### *Governor Little:*

21-day period is a science-based plan to flat line the virus. Numbers will increase before it settles. Idaho is doing an incredible job compared to many states.

#### *Brian Wonderlake (legal counsel):*

Article 4 in Idaho Constitution gives Governor authority in emergencies.

Title 46 specifies pandemics, Title 56 gives Director Jeppesen authority, Title 39 gives direction to public health districts.

#### *Alex Adams (Dept. of Finance):*

Every industry sector impacted. Economists running scenarios, new revenue forecast in April instead of August. Hold back in current fiscal year and transfers from savings into account. The state moved filing deadline to June 15 for benefits because of obligation to balance a budget, so can't match the federal government's earlier date.

#### *Janie Revier (Dept. of Labor) and Governor Little:*

Waive the waiting week and charges for unemployment. Claimants will be job attached, more time to appeal because of the wait time. Congressional **Cares (Coronavirus Aid Relief & Economic Security) Act**, will bring at least **\$1.25 billion to Idaho** to help businesses and individuals. **Rescue Package will direct distribution of \$1,200/ individual (up to \$75,000/yr income), \$2,400/joint returns, \$500/child (in 3 weeks if direct deposit, longer if check mailed), lending fund for businesses, educational stabilization money for schools and universities. Unemployment benefits are \$250-\$800/week, depending on state, \$600/week for up to 4 months, and benefits will run for 39 weeks.**

**Plus \$39.3 million from the State Tax Relief Fund to the Disaster Emergency account, the maximum under law**, for critical needs PPE, test kits, lab supplies, hospital beds, build extra facilities critical childcare. Executive Order to reduce state spending by 1%. Fiscal hold back of 1%, \$40 million, from agencies and departments except those working on this emergency.

Governor's Proclamation is for Idahoans temporarily unable to work, through no fault of their own, because of illness, quarantines, lay-offs.

Unemployment has risen. **Dept. of Labor: 13,341 new claims up 12,300, a 1200% increase in days. Before Coronavirus, Idaho record unemployment a low 2.7%.**

**Claimants for unemployment benefits:** waives one week waiting period for those eligible, makes easier to seek, employer must provide unemployment insurance and claimant must be prove if can or can't work medical provider, doctor. An additional 14 days to appeal claims/decisions will be added to the existing 14 days. **Businesses** who pay a quarterly

employment tax, will not be charged when their employees will be laid off due to the virus. Again, an addition 14 days to appeal. **These provisions are in effect beginning March 8, 2020.**

***Director Jeppesen (Dept. of Health & Welfare):***

Issuing guidance daily to healthcare sector/providers. Relaxed requirements immensely for telehealth use. WICK relaxed by feds, renewals held open and SNAP extended to June, 250% now to incorporate newly unemployed. Processing claimants by appointment only, until can't keep up.

When tested positive, probably had virus for at least a week. 3 days ago respiratory illnesses were on the rise indicating possible escalation. 2 weeks before we know if the trend slows down. Jumped 15 tests/day to 160/day at state lab. Commercial lab tests slow but improving, often results coming back after patient's symptoms are gone.

Rural areas are included in the Executive Order because they do not have medical resources to take care of the sick and will push pressure to other facilities/hospitals. Difficult to manage.

***Small Business Administration loans: website up, funds online.***

Congress's CARES Act has a Paycheck Protection Program and Loan Forgiveness provision, \$350 billion, for 100% federally guaranteed loans for 8 weeks of assistance to small businesses, 501©3, and 501©19 non-profit veteran organizations. Disaster loans have a 3.75% interest for a business loan and 2.75% interest on a non-profit loan. SBA has 30-year amortization loans to keep payment slow. Proprietors, independent contractors, self-employed individuals are also eligible for these loans.

These loans can be forgiven when used for payroll costs, interest on mortgage obligations, rent and utilities. SBA and non-SBA lenders will be authorized to make these loans, alleviating a lot of bottleneck, including their online portal. This will be expedited and most of the lenders in Idaho are SBA lenders. If you are going online to apply for a disaster loan, right now you can receive up to \$2 million of disaster relief, an economic entry disaster loan.

Site [www.sbs.gov/disaster](http://www.sbs.gov/disaster) to apply on online portal. Once submitted, can track your application at 800-659-2955 or email [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov). SBA questions can be directed to regional office 208-334-9004 in Boise, Small Business Development Center at 208-426-3875, Treasure Valley Chapter 208-334-1696 Women's Business Center 208-996-1572. Resources are free. Beware of scammers. If anyone is charging for services, should be reported to SBA as scammers. Can find information on [www.sba.gov/updates](http://www.sba.gov/updates) and the Idaho Department of Labor website.

***Brad Richy (Director of the Office of Emergency Management):***

Emergency Management received money from the State Emergency Fund and declaring a state critical emergency declaration brings in federal money. The State Emergency Fund will help communities like during a flood or wildfire. The unified coordination in the Emergency Response Center was joined by Region 10 employees. The department is waiting for another emergency funding request through a federal program.

Questions answered:

Why was the declaration made at the National Guard? That is where our Office of Emergency Management resides. Guard helps with emergency housing, beds, mobility of people and supplies, roadblocks when needed, requested by the communities.

Supplies: PPE, ventilators, test kits. Supply chain globally and nationally stretched.

Strategic National Stockpile, FEMA. **Idaho is the only state with a supply inventory cataloged and trackable.** To-date successful but reached max testing capacity. Commercial labs ramping up, but not smoothly, returning results @ 5-10 days out. State lab quicker, 2-5 days. Not testing asymptomatic people and the longer to get results of tests, the more we burn through PPE. 250 more ventilators from FEMA being compiled. Constantly sourcing.

Enforcement measures for stay at home order was discussed by phone yesterday with cities and counties. Always will have outliers and the unaware. Violation of the Order can be a misdemeanor, but education, deterrence, and disbursement first. The Idaho State Police is crafting enforcement policy now.

Essential services decision: Based on advice of the epidemiologist. List starts on page 6 of the Order. Set up phone line to give guidance about variety of situations as they arise.

H2A workers are going through health screenings and in-depth processing as they are entering, then will be expected to use hygiene and spacing. State Department will need to handle foreign students who need to get home.

Incarceration. Health profile of corrections is not typical to Idaho, safer than the population at large. Paroles and courts are prioritizing. Screening at county jails before mobility.

Property owners, landlords, property managers, associations communication to keep renters in place. They are hard to reach. Larger landlords are eligible for SBA loans. Evictions are not top of list and courts, cutbacks for isolating, are not processing them at this time, so there would be a delay anyway. State has reached out to the utilities for assistance.

Golf courses and churches will be reassessed this week and a directive coming.

**The Governor will decide today about the Presidential Primary.** So this is a draft.

The May Presidential Primary date is likely to remain. However, voting will be by mail only. The Secretary of State's office will send applications for absentee ballots to registered voters, who will then have to fill forms out to request an absentee ballot. Registering for affiliation can be done online. Return completed ballots before 11 days prior to election day. Same day registration and voting will not be available.