



SB 56 Extending COVID-19 Disaster Emergency

Presenters:

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Introduction: SB 56 Extending COVID-19 Emergency Declaration

Sectional Analysis of SB 56

Commissioner Crum

Overview of the Alaska Disaster Act – AS 26.23

Bryan Fisher

The Public Health Emergency & Disaster Declaration Timeline

Commissioner Crum

Authority under AS 26.23.020 that Allowed for State Response (March through Present)

Director Heidi Hedberg

Authority under AS 26.23.020 and Why it is Needed (Present to September 30, 2021)

Director Heidi Hedberg



SB 56 Extending COVID-19 Disaster Emergency

Section 1: Findings Sections

Section 2: Extension of the January 14 Disaster Declaration to September 30, 2021

Section 3: Finance Plan

Section 4: Report to the Legislature

Section 5: Professional Licensing; Courtesy Licenses

Section 6: Telehealth

Section 7: Fingerprinting

Section 8: Meeting of Shareholders; Notice of Shareholder Meetings

Section 9: Charitable Gaming Online Ticket Sales

Section 10 - 12: Repeal of certain sections of SB 241 (SLA 2020) and sections of SB 56 on certain dates

Section 13 – 14: Effective Date Sections



Overview of the Alaska Disaster Act

AS 26.23.010 Purpose of the Alaska Disaster Act:

- (1) reduce the vulnerability of people and communities of this state to damage, injury, and loss of life and property resulting from a disaster;
- (2) prepare for the prompt and efficient rescue, care, and treatment of persons victimized or threatened by a disaster;
- (3) provide a setting conducive to the rapid and orderly start of rehabilitation of persons and restoration of property affected by a disaster;
- (4) clarify and strengthen the roles of the governor, state agencies, and local governments in prevention of, preparation for, response to and recovery from a disaster;
- (5) authorize and provide for cooperation in disaster prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery;
- 6) authorize and provide for the coordination of activities relating to disaster prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery by agencies and officers of the state, and similar state-local, inter-state, federal-state, and foreign activities in which the state and its political subdivisions may participate; and
- (7) assist in the prevention of disasters caused or aggravated by inadequate planning for, and regulation of, public and private facilities and land use.



Overview of the Alaska Disaster Act

Definition of “Disaster” Related to an Outbreak or Credible Threat of an Imminent Outbreak of a Disease: AS 26.23.900

“Disaster” means the occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, loss of life or property, or shortage of food, water, or fuel resulting from –

(E) an outbreak of disease or a credible threat of an imminent outbreak of disease that the commissioner of health and social services or a designee of the commissioner of health and social services certifies to the governor has a high probability of occurring in the near future; the certification must be based on specific information received from a local, state, federal, or international agency, or another source that the commissioner or the designee determines is reliable;

Issuance of Disaster Declaration: AS 26.23.020(c)

Disaster Response and Recovery Aspects; Deployment, Use, Distribution of Supplies: AS 26.23.020(e)

Additional Powers to Aid in Response and Recovery During a Disaster: AS 26.23.020(g)

- suspend regulatory statutes prescribing procedures for the conduct of state business, or regulations of a state agency, if compliance with the provisions of the statute, order, or regulation would prevent, or substantially impede or delay, action necessary to cope with the disaster emergency
- use all available resources of the state government and of each political subdivision of the state as reasonably necessary to cope with the disaster emergency
- transfer personnel or alter the functions of state departments and agencies or units of them for the purpose of performing or facilitating the performance of disaster emergency services
- control ingress to and egress from a disaster area, the movement of persons within the area, and the occupancy of premises in it
- make provisions for the availability and use of temporary emergency housing
- allocate or redistribute food, water, fuel, clothing, medicine, or supplies



The Public Health Emergency & Disaster Declaration Timeline

Early Response by the State of Alaska

- January 27, 2020 DHSS Emergency Operations Center and State of Alaska Emergency Operation Center (SEOC) activated
- January 28, 2020 Repatriation Flight
- January 31, 2020 Federal Public Health Emergency Issued (retroactive to January 27, 2020)
- March 11, 2020 Unified Command
- Coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - Learning about the novel virus, science
 - Observations of states' response where outbreaks were occurring
 - Examining mitigation and response measures
- February 2020 Alaska State Public Health Lab could test for COVID-19
- February 2020 Preparing Alaska health care system
- March 2020 Engaged in community preparedness planning



March 2020 Alaska Disaster Declaration & Legislative Action

- Global & US Experience to Date
- State Experience to Date
- Initial Modeling
- Public Health Memo & Disaster Declaration

“Because COVID-19 is a new disease in humans, no one has an existing immunity to this virus. It appears likely that transmission can occur before the onset of symptoms. As such, some people who are infected could inadvertently transmit the virus to others. COVID-19 can cause severe disease, including pneumonia and death. Older individuals and people with serious underlying health conditions (e.g. lung disease, heart disease, or diabetes) or immune disorders are at increased risk for severe illness. There have been no confirmed cases of infection with the novel coronavirus in Alaska. For these reasons, under AS 26.23.900(2)(E), I certify that an outbreak of COVID-19 has a high probability of occurring in the near future.”

- SB 241 Approved by the Alaska Legislature
- Federal Relief Packages passed by Congress
 - March 4 - \$8 billion spending package
 - March 11 – Families First Coronavirus Response Act
 - March 29 – CARES Act



Initial Health Mandates

Issued	Original Health Mandate	Status
3/13/2020	001 Suspended Visitation – DOC, DJJ, AMYA, API/ limited visitation PH	1.2 Rescinded on March 30
3/16/2020	002 Libraries, Archives, Museums	Rescinded on March 31
3/17/2020	003 Public Dine-in Service	Superseded by Re-Open Alaska Responsibly Plan on April 22
3/17/2020	004 International Travel Quarantine	Superseded by Health Mandate 010 issued on March 23
3/19/2020	005 Elective Procedures	Superseded by Health Mandate 015 issued on April 15
3/20/2020	006 Elective Oral Health Procedures	Rescinded on April 19
3/20/2020	007 Fairbanks/Ketchikan Personal Care Services and Gatherings	Rescinded with issuance of Health Mandate 009 on March 23
3/20/2020	008 Public and Private Schools	Superseded by Health Mandate 013 issued on April 9
3/23/2020	009 Personal Care Services and Gatherings	Superseded by Re-Open Alaska Responsibly Plan on April 22
3/23/2020	010 International and Interstate Travel	Revised – June 3 (testing for travelers), August 6 (non-resident fee for testing), October 16 (changed strict social distancing recommendation to 5 days)
3/27/2020	011 Social Distancing	Superseded by Re-Open Alaska Responsibly Plan on April 22
3/27/2020	012 Intrastate Travel	Superseded in part by Health Mandate 018, issued on May 12
4/9/2020	013 K-12 Public and Private Schools	End of the 2019-2020 school year (May 2020)
4/13/2020	014 Non-Congregate Sheltering	Expired November 15
4/15/2020	015 Services by Healthcare Providers	Revised June 1, expired November 15
4/22/2020	016 Reopen Alaska Responsibly Plan	Completed May 22
4/23/2020	017 Independent Commercial Fishing Vessels	Expired November 15
5/12/2020	018 Intrastate Travel	Revised June 5 and expired on November 15

State Response Components

- Waiver and suspension of statutes and regulations for response
- Contracts & Procurement, and HR
 - Personal protective equipment, testing supplies, hiring temp employees
- Testing
 - Community testing sites, lab sample processing, data integrations, reporting
- Contact Tracing
 - Workforce, partnerships, IT
- Critical Infrastructure Industries & Workforce
- Partnerships & Collaborations
 - State agencies, local governments, school districts, private sectors, non-profits, advocacy groups
- Communications
 - Broad based communication strategies for mitigation measures, testing, science, health care providers, care givers, employers, educators, local leaders, school districts, families



November 16 Disaster Declaration

Public Health Memo to Governor Dunleavy regarding the status of COVID-19:

“Unfortunately, the COVID-19 emergency has not abated and we are no longer anticipating an imminent threat but instead infections are occurring in Alaska and have recently increased exponentially. Thus, a new disaster declaration is necessary as an “outbreak of disease” is occurring under AS 26.23.900(2)(E). Despite the state’s aggressive measures to contain and mitigate the effects of COVID-19, we continue to face escalating challenges with respect to COVID-19.”

As of this date:

- 48 million cases of COVID-19 confirmed worldwide
- 9 million cases in the United States with over 235,000 deaths
- Over 17,000 confirmed cases, and 84 deaths from COVID-19 in Alaska.

Eight Health Orders were authorized with the Issuance of the new Disaster Declaration.

November 16 Outbreak Health Orders:		
No 1	Suspension of Regulations and Statutes	Suspends certain regulations and statutes to allow agencies to best address the COVID-19 emergency
No 2	Telehealth & Courtesy Occupational Licenses	Authorizes telemedicine, access to licensees from other jurisdictions, and flexibility to certain licensing boards
No 3	Virtual Meetings & Electronic Communications for Boards	Allows business to be conducted virtually and via electronic communications for boards of corporations, non-profit, and ANCs
No 4	Non-Congregate Sheltering	Provides FEMA reimbursement eligibility for temporary sheltering and quarantine
No 5	Critical Infrastructure	Provides guidance for Critical Infrastructure businesses operating in the State of Alaska. Appendices with specific guidance for: commercial fishing, independent harvesters, and seafood processing plants.
No 6	International & Interstate Travel	Provides guidelines for residents and non-residents traveling into Alaska
No 7	Online Raffles & Prize Drawings	Allows charitable gaming permittees to conduct raffles, lotteries and other contests online
No 8	Intrastate Travel	Provides guidelines for persons traveling to communities off the road system & the Alaska Marine Highway System



December 15 Disaster Declaration

Public Health Memo to Governor Dunleavy regarding the status of COVID-19:

“the COVID-19 emergency has become more severe and infections are occurring in Alaska at a higher rate than ever before during this pandemic. Thus, a new disaster declaration is necessary as an “outbreak of disease” is occurring under AS 26.23.900(2)(E).”

As of December 15:

- 67 million cases of COVID-19 confirmed worldwide
- 15 million cases in the United States, with over 285,000 deaths
- 36,000 confirmed cases and 145 deaths in Alaska.
- More Alaskans died of COVID-19 in November than any other month in 2020.

The Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for Pfizer approved on December 11, 2020.

The EUA for Moderna approved on December 18, 2020.

December 15 Outbreak Health Orders:

No	Order Title	Description
No 1	Suspension of Regulations and Statutes	Suspends certain regulations and statutes to allow agencies to best address the COVID-19 emergency
No 2	Courtesy Licenses; Telehealth; Background	Authorizes telemedicine, access to licensees from other jurisdictions, and flexibility to certain licensing boards
No 3	Shareholder Meetings	Allows business to be conducted virtually and via electronic communications for boards of corporations, non-profit, and ANCs
No 4	Non-Congregate Sheltering	Provides FEMA reimbursement eligibility for temporary sheltering and quarantine
No 5	Critical Infrastructure	Provides guidance for Critical Infrastructure businesses operating in the State of Alaska. Appendices with specific guidance for: commercial fishing, independent harvesters, and seafood processing plants.
No 6	International & Interstate Travel	Provides guidelines for residents and non-residents traveling into Alaska
No 7	Online Ticket Sales	Allows charitable gaming permittees to conduct raffles, lotteries and other contests online
No 8	Intrastate Travel	Provides guidelines for persons traveling to communities off the road system & the Alaska Marine Highway System



January 15 Disaster Declaration

Public Health Memo to Governor Dunleavy regarding the status of COVID-19:

“Vaccines are now available to Alaskans and continued facilitation of the emergency response to this public health emergency, permitted under AS 26.23.020, is critical for the successful administration of a vaccine statewide. Through the Division of Public Health and cooperating providers statewide, over 25,000 vaccination doses have been administered in Alaska, prioritizing front-line health care workers, individuals in congregate settings, and elder Alaskans. Although Alaska is administering vaccinations more quickly than most other states, no one in the state has yet completed the two-dose series, and administration is still happening more slowly than the CDC had expected.”

As of January 15:

- 88 million cases confirmed worldwide, over 21 million cases in the United States
- 365,000 Americans have died from COVID-19
- In January 2021, a new strain of the SARS-Co-V-2 virus was identified in the United States
- 47,000 confirmed cases and 222 deaths in Alaska

As of January 31:

- 29.5 million vaccines administered in the United States
- 95,881 vaccines administered in Alaska – of those, 27,566 completed vaccine series

AS 26.23.020(g)(10): Allocate or redistribute, food, water, fuel, clothing, medicine, or supplies



SB 56 Extending COVID-19 Disaster Emergency

- Why is it needed?
- Specific authorities under AS 26.23.020 that have been utilized in the response in order to achieve the metrics Alaska has achieved.

Authority under AS 26.23.020 that Allowed for State Response (March through Present)

- Airport screening and testing at the airports that receive flights from the Lower 48 to identify importation of COVID cases
- Testing in Naknek, Dillingham, and Egegik for the Bristol Bay fishing season to prevent the transmission of COVID in rural communities w/ limited healthcare
- Testing supplies for the Alaska State Public Health Laboratories
- Community testing centers to identify community spread
- Testing supplies to support, Assisted Living Facilities, Skilled Nursing Facilities, and healthcare facilities in communities throughout Alaska
- 3D printed swabs and hand sanitizer– locally manufactured and purchased by the State for distribution
- Contractors to support screening and testing in congregate settings experiencing outbreaks
- PPE supplies directly from China when the US supply chain could not fulfill Alaska orders
- PPE supplies to support Assisted Living Facilities, Skilled Nursing Facilities, and healthcare facilities in communities throughout Alaska
- Medical supplies to support a field hospital staffed by Samaritans Purse in King Salmon for the Bristol Bay commercial fishing season
- Acquisition of warehouse space to receive, store and ship response supplies
- Contract to operate the temporary monoclonal antibody infusion center at the Alaska Airlines Center
- Contract to support statewide contact tracing
- Call centers to help answer questions (211, behavioral health, COVID docs, vaccine)
- Emergency hires: data entry staff, contract tracers, nurses, staff physicians, administrative staff, public health informatics
- Deployment of Alaska Respond volunteers to respond to community outbreaks and vaccine point of dispensing clinics
- Expanded use of telehealth in Alaska
- 14 • Expedited licensing to support health care workforce needs during the public health emergency



Authority under AS 26.23.020 that Allows for Continued State Response and Why it is Needed

- Allocation and distribution of COVID-19 vaccine in Alaska
- Procurement of vaccine ancillary supplies and equipment
- Site rentals for mass vaccination clinics conducted in partnership with Alaska Public Health Nursing
- Over time agreements to pay for staff time (lab sample processing, data entry, dashboard updates, outbreak response, vaccine administration)
- Vaccine strike teams to support remote communities and vaccinate eligible Alaskans
- Continued use of telehealth opportunities for Alaskans
- Expedited licensing to support health care workforce needed for vaccine administration

Thank you for your consideration of SB 56.
We are happy to answer committee questions.

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