



Capitol Report
By
Senator Gary Stevens
March 23, 2020

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

COVID-19 has reached Alaska, bringing with it much disruptions to our daily lives and drastic impacts and challenges to our economy. The urgency of this health crisis is not lost on the legislature. We are focused on getting the Fiscal Year '21 budget finalized, as well as approving legislation that will help lessen the impact on Alaskans and either adjourning the session or recessing until a later date. More information on the legislature's next steps are forthcoming.

Unemployment Insurance

The legislature has passed House Bill 308 waiving the one-week waiting period to apply for unemployment insurance. Pending the governor's signature, this will provide some quick relief for Alaskans who are not able to work or who are underemployed because public health measures related to COVID-19. The bill also increases the weekly per-child benefit from \$25 to \$75, providing relief for families who have lost childcare and income simultaneously.

Health Mandates

In response to the crisis, Governor Dunleavy has issued numerous Health Mandates including closing schools, limiting public gatherings, and curtailing elective medical and dental procedures.

Information is changing rapidly, but the constant message is to take this public emergency seriously and do not put yourself and others at risk. Please stay home if you're ill; practice social distancing by keeping at least six feet between yourself and others; wash your hands often; and contact your healthcare provider with any questions or concerns you may have about the virus.

More Information Online

The State of Alaska's Department of Health and Social Services is offering a wealth of information on COVID-19 at: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/default.aspx>

Information is changing rapidly. I encourage you to stay informed through the state's website and the media.

You can also call 211 for information. In places without 211 service, dial 1-800-478-2221.

Alaska 211 is a service of the United Way, and phone workers can direct callers to resources and answers.

Government Building Closures

The Capitol and many other state agencies are currently closed to the general public. Also included on this list are District P's Legislative Information Offices, although staff is still available to assist you by phone.

The Cordova LIO can be reached at (907) 424-5461

The Homer LIO can be reached at (907) 235-7878.

The Kenai LIO can be reached at (907) 283-2030.

The Kodiak LIO can be reached at (907) 486-8116.

PFD Application Period Update

The PFD filing deadline is Tuesday, March 31st. The quickest and easiest way to file an application is online, which requires you to answer only the questions that are necessary. An advantage for doing this is that you will get an immediate confirmation number when you submit your application. Eligible online applicants who select direct deposit as a payment method will be paid on Thursday, October 1, 2020.

In response to the CORVID-19 emergency leading to office closures throughout the state, the Permanent Fund Dividend Division is making this year's applications available for print from the FORMS tab on the division's website for those who are unable to file online.

Mailed in 2020 PFD applications must be postmarked by March 31st's deadline in order to be considered timely.

Eligible paper applications will be paid on Thursday, October 22, 2020.

You can get more information online at: <https://pfd.alaska.gov/>

Help for Small Business Owners

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is offering low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to Alaska small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>.

Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov(link sends e-mail) for more information on SBA disaster assistance.

Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing may call (800) 877-8339. Completed applications should be mailed to U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

For more information about available SBA resources and services, please visit: SBA.gov/coronavirus.

Thank you for reading this update. Please stay safe.