

**THE CITY OF HITCHCOCK, TEXAS
DECLARATION OF LOCAL DISASTER
DUE TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

WHEREAS, in December 2019, a novel respiratory disease named “SARS-CoV-2” that causes a disease named “coronavirus disease 2019” (“COVID-19”) was detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China; and

WHEREAS, symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath that may result in mild to severe illness, and in some cases death; and

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization Director General declared the outbreak of COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and advised countries to prepare for the containment, including active surveillance, early detection, isolation and case management, contact tracing, and prevention of onward spread of the disease; and

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2020, the U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary declared a public health emergency for the United States to aid the nation’s healthcare community in responding to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the identification of “community spread” cases of COVID-19 in the United States could potentially signal that transmission of the virus may no longer be limited to travel to outbreak areas or contact with travelers who have visited outbreak areas; and

WHEREAS, according to the Center for Disease Control (“CDC”), it is likely that at some point, widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the United States will occur; and

WHEREAS, the CDC warns that widespread transmission of COVID-19 would translate into large numbers of people needing medical care at the same time; and

WHEREAS, the CDC also warns that schools, childcare centers, workplaces, and other places for mass gatherings may experience more absenteeism; public health and healthcare systems may become overloaded with elevated rates of hospitalizations and deaths; other critical infrastructure, such as law enforcement, emergency medical services, and transportation industry may also be affected; and health care providers and hospitals may be overwhelmed; and

WHEREAS, approximately 2 persons in the City of Houston as of 3/12/20 and 14 persons in the region as of 3/12/20 have tested positive for the virus and it is anticipated that the number of persons diagnosed with the virus is likely to increase, as testing for the virus continues; and

WHEREAS, the City of Houston, a major population center in close proximity to the City of Hitchcock, declared a local disaster due to this same public health emergency on March 11, 2020; and

WHEREAS, given, among other things, including the CDC’s guidance, there is an

ongoing risk and likelihood of COVID-19-positive patients being identified in the City of Hitchcock; and

WHEREAS, the City, local health agencies, and political subdivisions within the region have been working diligently to implement CDC guidelines, but now require additional tools and resources to protect the public health given the current state of the epidemic and the need for a sustained response; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Texas Disaster Act of 1975, as amended, Texas Government Code, Chapter 418, (the "Texas Disaster Act"), the Mayor is designated as the Emergency Management Director of the City of Hitchcock, and may exercise the powers granted to the Governor on an appropriate local scale; and

WHEREAS, a declaration of local disaster due to this public health emergency includes the ability to reduce the possibility of exposure to disease, control the risk, promote health, compel persons to undergo additional health measures that prevent or control the spread of disease, including isolation, surveillance, quarantine, or placement of persons under public health observation, including the provision of temporary housing or emergency shelters for persons misplaced or evacuated and request assistance from the Governor of state resources; and

WHEREAS, by this Declaration, I declare all rules and regulations that may inhibit or prevent prompt response to this threat suspended for the duration of the incident; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the authority granted to the Mayor under the Texas Disaster Act, I authorize the use of all available resources of state government and political subdivisions to assist in the City's response to this situation; and

WHEREAS, the City of Houston, and the people and communities of the City have suffered or face imminent threat to the public health and the potential for loss of life and property resulting from a disaster: the introduction, transmission, or spread (or imminent threat of the same) of COVID-19 in the City of Houston; and

WHEREAS, I, the Mayor of the City of Hitchcock have determined that emergency measures must be taken to either prepare for or respond to a disaster due to this public health emergency in order to respond quickly, to prevent and alleviate the suffering of people exposed to and those infected with the virus, as well as those that could potentially be infected or impacted by COVID-19, and to prevent or minimize the loss of life;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF HITCHCOCK, TEXAS:

Section 1. Declaration of Local State of Disaster. That a local state of disaster and public health emergency is hereby declared for the City of Hitchcock pursuant to §418.108(a) of the Texas Disaster Act.

Section 2. Duration of Local State of Disaster. Pursuant to §418.108(b) of the Texas Disaster Act, the state of disaster and public health emergency shall continue for a period of not more than **seven days** from the date of this declaration unless

continued or renewed by the City Council.

Section 3. Publicity and Filing. Pursuant to §418.108(c) of the Texas Disaster Act, this declaration of a local state of disaster due to this public health emergency shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly with the City Clerk.

Section 4. Activation of the City Emergency Management Plan. Pursuant to §418.108(d) of the Texas Disaster Act, this declaration of a local state of disaster due to this public health emergency activates the City of Hitchcock Emergency Management Plan.

Section 5. Temporary Housing and Emergency Shelter. Pursuant to §418.020(d) of the Texas Disaster Act, this declaration authorizes the City to: (1) temporarily or permanently acquire by lease, purchase, or other means sites required for temporary housing units or emergency shelters for disaster victims; and (2) enter into arrangements necessary to prepare or equip the sites for installation and use of temporary housing units or emergency shelters, including arrangements necessary for the transportation and purchase of temporary housing units or emergency shelters.

Section 6. Pursuant to §122.006 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, the City is authorized take any actions necessary to promote health and suppress disease, including quarantine, examining and regulating hospitals. The City of Hitchcock hereby declares that those persons under investigation, persons under management, and quarantined persons remain within the confines of their homes or in safe, secure facilities during the quarantine period following their exposure to the virus.

Section 7. This proclamation shall take effect immediately upon its issuance.

ORDERED this 19th day of March, 2020.


Randy Strickland Mayor

ATTEST:



Nicholle Andrus, City Secretary