
MEMORANDUM

To: City of Beaumont
From: Townsend Public Affairs
Date: March 12, 2021
Subject: Bi-Monthly Report for the City of Beaumont

State Legislative Update

The Legislature continues to hold legislative and budgetary hearings to advance the nearly 2,500 active bills and put forth the Legislature's State Budget proposal. The Senate has waived the 30-day rule that requires bills to sit before being amended or heard to allow committees to start their work earlier than expected. This will also allow the Senate to utilize fewer committee rooms and sanitize the rooms before and after each hearing.

Below is a list of upcoming legislative deadlines:

March 25: Legislature begins Spring recess

April 30: Last day for policy committees to advance fiscal bills

May 7: Last day for policy committees to advance non-fiscal bills

May 21: Last day for fiscal committees to advance fiscal bills to the floor

Governor Delivers State of the State

Governor Newsom issued his State of the State address at Dodger Stadium, one of California's, and the Nation's, largest community COVID-19 vaccination sites. The Governor's comments included key statistics as well as major actions taken over the course of the pandemic, including:

- California's death rate has remained one of the lowest per capita in the nation: 134 per 100,000, compared to 158 nationally, 153 in Texas and 247 in New York.
- California now ranks sixth in the world for vaccine distribution, ahead of many major countries.
- The positivity rate is down from a high of 14 percent to 2.1 percent today. Hospitalizations are down more than 80 percent since their peak. ICUs are down 77 percent.

The Governor also touched on aid that has gone out to small businesses, school reopening efforts, and work on housing the homeless. The Governor also outlined proposals that have been included in his January Budget proposal to further invest in revitalizing California's economy.

State Guidance on Restaurants

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) updated public health guidance in the Blueprint for a Safer Economy to allow for additional safe and sustainable reopening activities in the state. Beginning March 13, breweries, wineries and distilleries that do not serve meals may open outdoors only with modifications in the Purple (widespread) and Red (substantial) tiers. In the Orange (moderate) Tier, indoor operations may begin with 25 percent of maximum capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer. In the Yellow (minimal) tier, indoor operations may increase to 50 percent of maximum capacity or 200 people, whichever is fewer.

The updated guidance does not apply to breweries, wineries and distilleries that already provide meals. Those establishments should continue to follow the restaurant guidance. Beginning March 13, bars that do not serve meals remain closed in the Purple (widespread) and Red (substantial) tiers. In the Orange (moderate) tier, bars may begin outdoor operations with modifications. In the Yellow (minimal) tier, bars may begin indoor operations with modifications of 25 percent maximum capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer. Beginning June 1, overnight sleepaway camps will be allowed to resume with modifications in the Red, Orange and Yellow tiers.

Governor Signs Executive Order

The Governor signed an EO N-03-21 which extends authorization for local governments to halt evictions for commercial renters impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through June 30, 2021. The order also extends protections against price gouging for emergency supplies and medical supplies amid the ongoing emergency response to the pandemic.

Federal Legislative Update

President Joe Biden signed into law the \$1.9 trillion “American Rescue Plan Act,” the sweeping aid package that includes state and local funding, direct payments, and jobless benefits for Americans.

Below are the notable additions to the legislation:

- **State and Local Funding:** An additional \$10 billion for local funding, restored at the last minute from a cut designed to create a state-run infrastructure slush fund. The infrastructure fund remains, and the local cut has been restored. The Senate also added eligible uses of funds, including some infrastructure and premium pay to essential employees.
- **Shuttered Venues:** Congress eliminated the provision that forced eligible venue operators and museums to choose between the PPP and the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG). They could now apply for both and just have their PPP deducted from the larger SVOG.
- **Firefighter Grants:** The Senate added \$300 million in firefighter grants.
- **Health Insurance:** The bill would allow individuals who receive unemployment compensation in 2021 to qualify for reduced cost-sharing under the ACA, and would subsidize 100% of premiums for individuals eligible for COBRA continuation coverage if they lose their job.

COVID-19 Vaccine

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) formally recommended the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine for adults ages 18 and older. The Biden Administration has started shipping almost 4 million doses of this vaccine which requires one shot and can be stored in normal refrigerators.

PPP Forgiveness Guidance

The IRS issued guidance clarifying that businesses with forgiven Paycheck Protection Program loans can still claim a tax credit meant to encourage businesses to keep employees on their payroll. The guidance follows the December relief law which allowed businesses with a PPP loan to also receive the employee retention credit. The guidance provides employers with information to determine their eligibility to receive the employee retention credit, incorporating information the agency previously posted in FAQs.