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**ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDATION**

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**TO:** MAYOR JENSEN AND BOROUGH ASSEMBLY  
**FROM:** KARL HAGERMAN, EOC INCIDENT COMMANDER   
**SUBJECT:** LOCAL EMERGENCY DECLARATION AND COVID RESPONSE  
**DATE:** 5/26/2021  
**CC:** STEVE GIESBRECHT, BOROUGH MANAGER  
DEBRA THOMPSON, BOROUGH CLERK

I am extremely please to offer the following recommendations to the Assembly. It has been a long grind since March of 2020 when the EOC and PMC shifted into overdrive, while asking all other citizens to shift into park, to deal with a disease threat that none of us had heard of before. At present, Petersburg has seemingly weathered the largest test of our considerable vaccination success, the annual Little Norway Festival. Although many mitigation plans were submitted prior to the events of the celebratory weekend, the crowds were obviously ready to forego caution and simply have a good time – and who can blame them, it has been a long haul for everyone. Now that we are nearly two weeks past the festival and can see that no outbreak is eminent or ongoing, it is clear that Petersburg is not as vulnerable to the coronavirus as we were during the February outbreak. This fact has allowed me to reflect on the current state of our emergency response and to confidently recommend that the local Emergency Declaration be rescinded and the EOC be disbanded.

To that end, the EOC humbly requests that the Assembly convene a special meeting on June 1, 2021 and recommends the following initial actions be taken by the Assembly at that time:

1. **Rescind the local Emergency Declaration on June 30, 2021.** At this time, there are many functions and programs that have been developed and put in place to help the community and disseminate information. The EOC needs time to retract those efforts and programs and put things back into their normal state. A draft resolution is attached to this memo for consideration by the Assembly. The resolution, if approved, will set the expiration date of the local Emergency Declaration at midnight on June 30, 2021. Over the next month, the EOC will actively work to retract and stand down its presence in the community, including recommendations to the Assembly for repeal of various public health mandates and directives during regular Assembly meetings.
2. **Repeal the local face covering mandate.** This mandate has been controversial for many in the community, but it has also helped to protect us. At this time, and in consideration of the State of Alaska's Health Advisory #1 that recommends face coverings for non-vaccinated persons, the EOC recommends that the Assembly repeal the mandate and allow residents to choose if they wish to wear a mask in public. Science supports the CDC recommendations for mask wearing of non-vaccinated persons, but our local vaccination rate has proven to be effective in mitigating the spread of the virus. It is time to rely on the State and Federal government's guidance on this issue, as well as our improving vaccination rate, to keep us safe and healthy. To be clear, the EOC is not recommending all citizens to stop wearing masks, but that citizens should follow State and CDC guidance on the issue.

3. **Approve EOC Plan to Stand Down.** Attached to this memo is a plan both for legislative retractions by the Assembly and for operational retractions by the EOC. If approved, this plan will serve as the road map over the next month to transition the community back to a more normal state. The goal is to have all EOC programs, local mandates and services either ended or handed off to appropriate resources by July 1. The plan and timelines offer details on the disposition of various aspects of the EOC's operation.

If these recommendations are accepted and approved by the Assembly, I will start the process of standing down the EOC in keeping with the presented plan.

I believe that the excellent work by the Petersburg Borough EOC, Petersburg Medical Center, Public Health Nurse and many volunteers has protected the community in the face of the pandemic. The lengths at which we have all gone through to inform, protect, guide, advise, trace, treat and finally to vaccinate our citizens has been exhausting, but very rewarding.

I recognize and thank all of the team members for doing their part to keep Petersburg citizens safe and healthy. While COVID-19 has not been eradicated yet, I am very confident that Petersburg can now handle the disease as it arises occasionally and if new variants do create enough concern or disease to warrant a renewed response, a future emergency declaration can be established to handle it.

Please let me know if there are any questions. Thank you for your consideration.