



PRESS RELEASE
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Yesterday, May 19, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors announced that by a 3-2 vote, they were acting to do the following:

- Declare the County "open" completely through stage 3 of the Governor's plan.
- Override the Public Health Officers orders including halting all civil enforcement related to stay at home orders contained in the order.
- Direct the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) of the County to issue guidance mirroring the state's guidance for stage 3 opening.
- Direct the HHSA to shift its efforts from attempting to meet state metrics to assisting with problem areas and populations in the County including but not limited to: The elderly and health compromised, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Hospitals and ICU's and businesses or agencies with reported outbreaks.

Following the County action, the Tulare City Council convened its regular meeting on May 19. As it has done since the outbreak, the Council heard an agenda item to discuss and provide direction on the City's continued efforts in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. The Tulare City Council unanimously agreed to continue following the recommendations of the State and the CDC and to provide its position to the citizens of Tulare on this very important health issue.

Although the Board of Supervisors oversees the unincorporated areas of Tulare County and does provide county-wide services, their vote does not direct businesses and/or residents of the City of Tulare. The Tulare City Council strongly encourages residents to proceed with caution in acting outside of the State and Federal guidelines, understanding that local law enforcement may still enforce any State order and that even through Stage 3 of the State's reopening plan, social distancing measures must be taken in order to be in compliance. Prior to the May 19 action of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors the County, as a whole, had not yet advanced through the first phase of Stage 2.

The City of Tulare's message to businesses and residents is that there are many State agencies that neither the City nor the County have or exercise control over. These include licensing boards, such as the Department of Consumer Affairs, which oversees the Board of Barbering and Cosmetology and the Department of

Alcoholic Beverage Control. The premature opening of businesses, not following the safety guidelines when open, can result in those agencies taking action.

The City of Tulare has no intent to issue any directive that would contradict State guidelines; to do so not only creates health and safety risks, but also jeopardizes funding from the State to reimburse costs related to the mitigation of COVID-19 in our community. As a result of the County's declaration yesterday, the County received a letter from the Office of Emergency Services last night (Tuesday, May 19) which threatened exactly that, not only to the County, but to the Cities within the County, even though the City of Tulare was not consulted or provided any input into the County's decision.

The City of Tulare is facing unprecedented shortfalls in its budget due to COVID-19, and as such, are unwilling to take any action that further risks the City's financial future.

The City of Tulare is eager to get businesses open and residents' lives back to normal; however, we are committed to doing so only in a safe manner for all.