

STATEWIDE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEW YORK CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE UPDATE

MARCH 15, 2020

Status Update: Gov. Cuomo held a press conference this afternoon to update the states response to the ongoing spread of coronavirus. In substance, new efforts to mitigate density in the state include:

- Urging businesses to "aggressively" consider voluntary closures and reductions in workforce;
- Mandatory closures will be considered and occupancy restrictions "calibrated up", if need be;
- All non-essential state employees from Rockland County south are asked to stay home;
- Non-essential State court system functions will be postponed. The State Court System expected to announce a full plan tomorrow;
- The Governor has assigned Dr. Jim Malatras to work with local governments to mitigate the negatives of school closures (child care for working adults - in particular vital first responders and healthcare workers - & student meals). School closures remains a local decision.

The state confirmed a third COVID-19 death, that of a 78 year old woman. The statewide total of positive tests has risen to 729.

Capitol: The Capitol is now closed to non-government officials and is in the process of being cleaned. That said, the Governor's staff and senior Legislative staff are all still currently at the Capitol. We expect the Capitol to remain closed to non-government officials this week.

Legislative Session: The legislature is still currently set to return to Albany tomorrow for scheduled session, which remains scheduled through Wednesday. At today's press conference, the Governor was adamant about the Legislature remaining in town to "do their jobs," several times likening the Legislature leaving town as declaring war and having the army go home. He also drew several comparisons to a crisis like this being the fundamental job of elected officials and if they want to go home, "they chose the wrong career."

State Budget: When asked if the Governor plans to try and finish a budget by Friday of this week he replied "no." The Governor stated it is the Legislature's job to be here and the plan is to complete the budget by April 1st.

The Governor indicated that while he does not want to pass anything in the budget that "has not been thought through," he indicated "99% of the issues have been vetted" and they are left to "yay or nay" on decisions that need to be vetted only politically.

Certainly the Governor is putting a lot of pressure on the Legislature to say in town and negotiate a budget despite the fact two Assembly members have tested positive for COVID-19. We have not seen a reaction from legislative leaders just yet.

As always, do not hesitate to contact us with any of your questions or concerns.

The Statewide Public Affairs Team