

COVID-19 Update From EKA – April 30, 2020

If you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance, please reach out to EKA, and we will be happy to assist you. Please feel free to share our daily email updates. If you would like to see previous EKA COVID-19 updates, click [here](#).

Stay At Home Order Day 43

Today is day 43 of the [statewide "Stay-at-Home" Order](#). 51 days ago, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a Pandemic.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Public Health Interactive Dashboard

The Los Angeles Department of Public Health created an interactive dashboard that provides an overview on COVID-19 testing, cases and deaths along with maps and graphs showing testing, cases and death data by community poverty level, age, sex and race/ethnicity. African Americans, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and people living in communities with high levels of poverty continue to have the highest rate of death per 100,000 people for COVID-19 when compared to other groups. Click [here](#) to view Public Health's COVID-19 Surveillance Dashboard.

Free COVID-19 Tests Available for ALL Los Angeles County Residents

Free COVID-19 tests are available for ALL Los Angeles County residents, including Culver City residents, whether or not you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Priority for the same or next day testing is still given to people with symptoms, such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Testing is also prioritized for certain critical front-line workers who interact with the public while working, including:

- First responders
- Critical government personnel
- Health care professionals
- Grocery workers
- Delivery, rideshare, and public transit drivers
- Credentialed members of the media
- Construction workers

Click [here](#) to visit the COVID-19 testing website for more information and to sign up for a free test.

Face Covering Guidance While Working Out

A few people have asked if they need to wear a cloth face covering while exercising outdoors. Here are the short answers: yes, when you are near others (anywhere close to 6 feet) and no, when there is no one around according to Barbara Ferrer, Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

LA Councilmembers Call for Temporary Halt on State Law Prohibiting Rent Controls

Six Los Angeles City Councilmembers called today for the temporary suspension of a state law that governs rent prices until the end of the coronavirus pandemic. The [Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act](#), passed in 1995, limits California cities from controlling rent increases. The Councilmembers who called for the suspension citing "unprecedented unemployment and increasing debt" as the May 1 due date for rent payments approaches and said the law has prevented California cities from passing broad measures to freeze rents in place, even during an emergency. As we previously reported, the City Council voted last Thursday to have the City Attorney's Office draft an ordinance that would halt rent increases for units protected by the City's Rent Stabilization Ordinance for 360 days. Initially, motions were filed to put a temporary stop to rent increases on all residential rental units, not just the ones protected by the stabilization ordinance. However, Deputy City Attorney David Michaelson said that might not be legal under Costa-Hawkins. To read Councilmember Ryu's letter Governor Newsom urging him to suspend the law, click [here](#). To read the new letter with additional Councilmembers, click [here](#). To read the press release, click [here](#).

Council Adopts Laws to Protect Laid-Off Workers

Despite vociferous public objection during this morning's L.A. City Council meeting from various entities and associations across a wide array of businesses, the City Council voted unanimously (15-0) to approve agenda item 29 recommending that Mayor Garcetti approve and enact two COVID-19-driven workforce ordinances: The Right of Recall and The Worker Retention Ordinances. Mayor Garcetti said last week that he would sign the ordinances as soon as they got to his desk. Under the measures, businesses will be required to provide notices to workers that they have begun rehiring people, after the coronavirus pandemic subsides. Laid-off workers will have 10 days to respond to worker recall notices from employers, and people who have worked for businesses the longest will be prioritized. Employers will have 15 days to respond to claims against them from employees who are not given ample opportunity to be rehired. The ordinances are vaguely worded (a fact the City Councilmembers themselves noted, admitting the proposed legislation was "not a model of clarity"). For example, covered businesses will be required to:

- Offer employees discharged since March 4 all *positions* that become available for which the employees are qualified and (arguably) even if not necessarily experienced.
- Offer positions to the discharged employee with the greatest length of service should more than one employee be qualified for a position (arguably) regardless of whether the employee with more seniority is less qualified than others.
- Provide recall-eligible discharged employees at least five days to accept an offer and various measures to ensure receipt of the offer.
- Provide a "preferential hire list" of workers that subsequent employers will have to hire from, for at least six months following a change in control;

Businesses that change owners during the pandemic will have to give qualified laid-off employees a 90-day window to continue working for the business, after which a performance evaluation will be considered. When the 90-day period ends, the business will be able to consider whether that employee's work has been satisfactory. Employers at convention and event centers or venues with 1,000 seats or more or larger than 50,000 square feet will also be required to provide their employees a chance to retain their jobs. If a collective bargaining agreement is already in place between the employees and employers, the terms of the protection will be in place until the agreement expires. After that, employers would then be required to comply with the City's standards. The laws will apply to businesses with 50 or more employees but exempts restaurants not owned by the hospitality industry. The ordinances also exclude nonprofit institutions of higher learning that operate medical centers in the City of Los Angeles. The Chief Legislative Analyst will report to the City Council and Mayor before March 2022 on the effectiveness of the ordinances and recommendations for additional protections, based on the City's recovery from the COVID-19.

Commercial Tenant Lease Protection

The City Council also voted to request the Chief Legislative Analyst, City Attorney, Economic & Workforce Development Department and Small Business Commission to report back on the viability of extending [previously adopted](#) protections for commercial lease tenants. The [proposal](#) before the Council was to extend the amount of time commercial tenants could pay back their monthly leases from 3 months up to a possible 12 months for businesses that have less than 50 employees. While the Council declined an outright extension, they were vocal in their concerns to protect small businesses and commercial property managers. Ultimately the Council will decide based on input from the City department that will be able to determine a balanced approach that will provide clarity on the reach, range and application of the ordinance.

Task Force to Assess Safety of Resuming Filming

Councilman Mitch O'Farrell introduced a motion to create a task force that would report on the safest ways for on-location filming to resume in Los Angeles, once the COVID-19 emergency orders are relaxed or lifted. The motion requests the nonprofit FilmLA and the Office of Citywide Filming to prepare recommendations for forming the task force with industry experts, city departments and, if possible, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. The task force would report to the City Council's Health, Education, Neighborhoods, Parks, Arts and River Committee within 30 days of its creation. The motion requests FilmLA to prepare a report of best practices for on-location filming that takes into consideration the close proximity in which actors and production crews work on a film set. FilmLA would also work with the City's General Services Department to prepare a report on how to design protocols on the use of city facilities for film locations. This would take into account the health, safety and welfare of productions and their crews as well as the city employees of the publicly-owned buildings being used.

No-Touch Crosswalks

Over the past several weeks, the L.A. Department of Transportation has installed automatic walk cycles in neighborhoods with high pedestrian traffic. Initially launched in downtown L.A.,

the no-touch crosswalk features have expanded to Hollywood, Westlake, MacArthur Park, Chinatown, and Koreatown. To read more about the no-touch crosswalks, click [here](#) to read the LADOT press release.

LONG BEACH

Long Beach launched an online survey, [ReopenLB](#), to seek input from residents, workers and business owners about how to safely reopen the local economy once Governor Newsom's order indicates it is safe to do so. The Mayor believe that we are weeks, not months away from some meaningful adjustments to the stay at home order. The City is preparing for a phased approach. The Mayor believes that the best ideas and most innovative ideas are going to come from the small business owners who know their business and customers. Click [here](#) to provide input. Survey responses will be collected until 5 p.m. on Monday, May 4.

SACRAMENTO

All California Beaches and State Parks To Close Starting Friday

All California beaches and state parks are expected to temporarily close starting Friday in an attempt to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It has been reported that the Governor plans to announce the closures today, [according to Fox11](#), which obtained a law enforcement bulletin that is supposed to be sent to all California Police Chiefs notifying them of the closures. The new closures come after Orange County beaches were packed with thousands of people last weekend.

Expansion of Farm to Family Program and New Initiatives to Combat Food Insecurity

Governor Newsom announced new initiatives to help feed people while also supporting the farm industry. Yesterday, the Governor unveiled \$3.64 million in new funding to expand the state's Farm to Family program, including \$2.86 million from the USDA and \$775,000 committed by philanthropy to jumpstart a \$15 million campaign to further support the program through the end of the year. The Governor said that CalFresh recipients will receive the maximum benefits for the month of May. The continued expansion of benefits was secured through a USDA waiver that allows all households to receive the maximum allowable benefit amounts, and is a continuation of the same level of benefit received in March and April. On April 12, just over 1.3 million households received a total of nearly \$223 million in additional CalFresh benefits with an average increase of \$169 per household. Families with children eligible for free or reduced price meals are eligible to receive additional support thanks to the Pandemic Emergency Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT). As we mentioned in a previous update, the Governor approved EBT use for online purchasing. Participants can now use their EBT card to make purchases online at Amazon.com and Walmart.com and the Governor is urging supermarkets to also join. Purchases can be completed online with CalFresh food benefits and P-EBT benefits.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program

The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program is an emergency unemployment assistance program made available under the Federal CARES Act. This program provides assistance for unemployed or partially unemployed individuals who are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance and includes independent contractors, self-employed workers, and those who have exhausted their U.I. benefits. The Employment Development Department (EDD) is now accepting online applications for this program. For more information, click [here](#).

Caltrans Temporarily Suspends Homeless Camp Cleanups

Caltrans has temporarily suspended homeless camp cleanups near highways due to COVID-19. Caltrans issued a statement that reads, "Due to concerns over COVID-19 and to limit its potential spread among the homeless population, Caltrans is temporarily suspending encampment cleanups unless there is an immediate safety concern, but will continue to work with local partners to move individuals into safer situations as available."

NATIONAL

Feds Issue Warning To Employers Accepting PPP Loans

As detailed in a story in our What we are Reading section, The Treasury Department issued a warning to "all borrowers" scooping up funds from the pool of billions of dollars of potentially forgivable loan money from the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) – and provided them with an escape hatch if they now realize they shouldn't have dipped into the well. According to the update to the Department's "Frequently Asked Questions," businesses are required to "assess their economic need for a PPP loan" before submitting an application. Further, the guidance advises borrowers that they have until May 7 to pay the loan funds back to avoid further scrutiny or other legal consequences. The guidance came after reports emerged involving publicly traded companies receiving more than \$500 million in potentially forgivable loans out of the \$300 billion dollar PPP pool. In response to recent public outcry over this situation, the Treasury Department updated FAQ No. 31 to state that "all borrowers should review carefully the required certification that 'current economic uncertainty makes this loan request necessary to support the ongoing operations of the Applicant.'" The EKA team will continue to monitor the ever-changing SBA and PPP situation and provide updates. To read the April 29 version of the FAQ, click [here](#).

Fed Chair Says This Is The Worst Economy In History

At a news conference carried live, Fed Chairman Jerome Powell said "We are going to see economic data for the second quarter that is worse than any data we have seen for the economy. There are direct consequences of the disease and measures we are taking to protect ourselves from it." The recovery will be long and painful, but the economy could begin to bounce back significantly in the third quarter as businesses reopen, he added. While we won't go back to pre-coronavirus levels for quite some time, the third quarter could provide some economic relief. "We will enter the new phase — and we are just beginning to maybe do that — where we will begin formal measures that require social distancing will be rolled back, gradually, and at different paces in different parts of the country. And in time, during this

period, the economy will begin to recover. Powell also noted that unemployment shot higher for minorities in the United States —much faster than it has for white Americans. Just a few months ago, the U.S. labor market was the best-ever for minorities, Powell noted. Now, minorities are among the first to lose their jobs as stay-at-home orders have shuttered restaurants, movie theaters, retailers and many other businesses. "It is heartbreaking, frankly, to see that all threatened now," Powell said. "All the more need for our urgent response and also that of Congress, which has been urgent and large, and to do what we can to avoid longer run damage to the economy." Powell noted that people "who are least able to bear it have been the first to lose their jobs, and they have little cushion to protect themselves. "That is a very big concern," Powell said. To watch the entire news conference, click [here](#).

President Invokes Defense Production Act To Keep Meat Processing Plants Open

The President signed an executive order on invoking the Defense Production Act to keep meat processing plants open. According to reports, plants owned by some of the country's largest food companies have struggled with outbreaks COVID-19 among workers and a growing death toll. The executive order also applies to plants that have already closed, which will have to re-open with healthy workers. The executive order declares meat processing plants critical infrastructure to protect against disruptions to the food supply, a person familiar with the matter said earlier Tuesday. The federal government will also provide workers with additional protective gear and guidance.

WHAT WE'RE READING

AEG, Live Nation, Broadway, More Sign Letter Requesting Federal Aid For Concerts and Events

A coalition of the top concert promoters, venue managers and show producers have joined forces to request federal aid for the live entertainment industry as it faces an existential crisis from the COVID-19 pandemic. *Billboard* obtained a copy of the memo, which calls on Congress to expand the Paycheck Protection Act to entertainment companies with 500 or fewer employees, as well as an expansion of loans to mid-sized businesses under the CARES Act and the Federal Reserve's Main Street Lending program. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Feds To Audit Companies Taking Over \$2M In COVID Aid

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin announced plans Tuesday to conduct a full audit of the largest recipients of emergency small business loans through a coronavirus relief program. Established to quell financial hardships brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, forgivable loans provided through the \$660 billion [Paycheck Protection Program](#) are meant to aid small businesses with 500 employees or less.

In the past month, however, many [big companies](#) have reportedly tapped into the funds. Among them are Wall Street-backed firms, fast food chains and the Los Angeles Lakers basketball team.

To read the full story, click [here](#).

Criticism Grows Over Gov. Gavin Newsom's Management Of The Coronavirus Crisis

Initially applauded for his approach to the coronavirus crisis, Gov. Gavin Newsom was the first governor to impose a statewide stay-at-home order, a move that health experts have credited with slowing the spread of the virus and helping California record far fewer deaths than hot spots such as New York. But as the crisis continues, Newsom's management of the response is renewing critiques of an impatient, and at times chaotic, governing style that dogged his first year in office. To read the full story, click [here](#).

CHP Bans Protests At California Capitol After Rally Against Newsom's Stay-At-Home Order

Following [Monday's protest](#) at the state Capitol where demonstrators defied Gov. Gavin Newsom's orders banning large gatherings, the California Highway Patrol says it will no longer issue permits for events at any state properties, including the Capitol. "Permits are issued to provide safe environments for demonstrators to express their views," the CHP said in a statement. "In this case, the permit for the convoy was issued with the understanding that the protest would be conducted in a manner consistent with the state's public health guidance. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Businesses Seek Sweeping Shield From Pandemic Liability Before They Reopen

A new legal and political front is coming into view as the nation starts to ease public health limits that have crippled the economy: Will business owners fear lawsuits and stay closed anyway?

To read the full story, click [here](#).

The Effect of COVID-19 on Government Debt, Borrowing, and Spending

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought shortages of many things, from ventilators in hospitals to hand sanitizer on store shelves. Tax revenue is in deficit, too, causing federal budget shortfalls of a scale not seen since World War II. Most states are in such dire financial straits that some politicians have even proposed letting them file for bankruptcy. At the federal level, the government budget deficit may be 17% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020, estimates the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), though it could well be higher. Deficits of consumption and production are guaranteed to produce deficits on the government's balance sheet. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Apple, Google Deliver Early Tools To Public Health Authorities For Coronavirus Tracking

[Apple](#) and [Google](#) are delivering the first tools for their [coronavirus](#) tracking technology on Wednesday to certain public health authorities, with the aim of improving the technology before the software's full release in mid-May. During the initial testing phase, a limited group will gain access to the first seeds of the exposure notification application programming interface. The move follows Apple's and Google's normal operations for introducing new software. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Dr. Anthony Fauci Says Gilead's Remdesivir Will Set A New' Standard Of Care' For Coronavirus Treatment

White House health advisor Dr. Anthony Fauci said that data from a coronavirus drug trial testing Gilead Sciences' antiviral drug remdesivir showed "quite good news" and sets a new

standard of care for Covid-19 patients. Fauci said the median time of recovery for patients taking the drug was 11 days, compared with 15 days in the placebo group. The results suggested a survival benefit, with a mortality rate of 8% for the group receiving remdesivir versus 11.6% for the placebo group, according to a statement from the National Institutes of Health. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Contact-Tracing Apps Could Help Contain COVID-19 But Raise Thorny Legal And Privacy Issues

In April, Donald Trump called smartphone proximity technology to combat the spread of COVID-19 "an amazing thing" that nevertheless raises "constitutional problems." "We have more of a constitutional problem than a mechanical problem, but we will be making a determination on that," Trump said during an April 13 [press briefing](#) at the White House. That was in response to a reporter's question about Apple and Google's partnership to create Bluetooth technology for Android and iOS phones to curb the virus. Contact tracing through smartphone proximity technology measures the strength of a users' Bluetooth signal, and allows people who have contracted the virus to voluntarily report to public health authorities. To read the full story, click [here](#).

California Courts Like Day And Night In Handling Pandemic

A wholly reasonable request during normal times, [Carlos Tavares](#) is pushing for the right to walk into the shiny new \$556 million downtown San Diego courthouse and file the lawsuits piling up and gathering dust on his desk. Hell, Tavares would even swap the state-of-the-art facility for the asbestos-riddled old courthouse on Broadway if it meant getting motions time-stamped, securing case numbers and starting discovery for his clients. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Investors Stay the Course Through Shake, Rattle & Roll of Economy

The U.S. economy shrunk by nearly 5% in the first quarter of 2020, its largest drop since the Great Recession, but for Wall Street that was old news. Advanced estimates by the Bureau of Economic Analysis found that the country's gross domestic product fell by 4.8%, according to the [report](#). GDP had increased by 2.1% in the fourth quarter of last year. The report includes only estimates, and more fulsome data is expected later this spring. To read the full story, click [here](#).

COVID-19: Groups Form To Help Undocumented Immigrant

While we remain in the throes of an increasingly savage pandemic, policy makers at all levels of government are trying to soften the impact of the outbreak on our physical and financial health.

But they are not the only ones: A group of little-known organizations are trying to ease the impact on an especially vulnerable community — undocumented immigrants. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Note: *This update has been prepared for informational purposes and is compiled from publicly available sources and is not intended to be legal or tax advice. All hyperlinks are live and will bring you to the information mentioned.*