



MEDIA RELEASE

San Juan County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 2, 2020

San Juan County Health Officer Order Extended to MAY 31st

Concurring with an April 29, 2020 decision by the San Juan County Board of Health, San Juan County Health Officer Dr. Frank James has extended his order limiting transient accommodations, camping, and access to playgrounds from May 4th until May 31st.

This decision is intended to align with Governor Inslee's May 1st announcement that as part of his phased approach to reopening, he will extend his "Stay Home Stay Healthy" order until May 31st.

In addition to the restrictions described above, the existing Health Officer order requires the posting of notice at all parks to limit group gatherings, and at all marinas, ports, and on all marine passenger vessels to highlight that as per the Governor's order, all non-essential travel in Washington is prohibited. The initial San Juan County Health Officer order [is available online here](#), and the latest Health Officer order extending the date until May 31st [is online here](#).

San Juan County is sending out letters to those who hold vacation rental permits in San Juan County, notifying them of the extension. The Town of Friday Harbor will continue to monitor transient accommodations to ensure that any bookings are only for those doing essential work or activities.

Dr. James explains the thinking that went into this decision, "The fact that it has been more than two weeks since we had our last confirmed case in San Juan County is very good news. We got to that point through a dedicated public health effort and by the sacrifice and commitment of our residents and business owners. We need to protect that progress and ensure the protection of the health and safety of all. There are still cases occurring daily in Washington, and the curve of new cases across the state has not been dropping as fast as we would like. We're in a good place now to respond to and hopefully contain any new cases on our islands. We need to ensure we're prepared to handle a larger volume of need before we can welcome visitors back to the islands with open arms."

San Juan County Council Chair Rick Hughes highlights his support for this move, "At a minimum, we're going to match the Governor's Stay at Home Order. If there's a limit on non-essential travel across Washington, there should be a limit on non-essential transient lodging- that just makes sense. We've set the date of May 15th to revisit this order, and we'll work with Dr. James and the Board of Health to take a close look then."

San Juan County will work with local lodging establishments and business owners to ensure that when the time comes to reopen lodging, there is a good set of guidelines in place to do so safely. A number of local hotels or resorts have already been working hard on doing exactly this, so they're ready to reopen thoughtfully and safely when the time comes to do so.

Dr. James understands the impact of the current situation on local businesses and jobs, "I recognize that the Governor's limit on travel and then San Juan County reinforcing his action with a limit on

transient lodging are decisions that have enormous economic impacts. I ask everyone to know that we're working hard to be prepared for an eventual reopening and that it will be a measured and staged approach, with a carefully considered goal of minimizing economic impacts while still respecting the science of the pandemic and the public health needs of the islands."

San Juan County Councilmember Jamie Stephens clarifies the overall goal, "San Juan County will continue to work to maintain the health and safety of our islands, while also understanding the need to protect the economic health of our islands' families. This is not about making a trade between our health needs versus our economic needs. We are all committed to the balance we need to achieve before we start reopening our islands."