



July 29, 2020

MEMBER
JURISDICTIONS

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23218

CHESAPEAKE

FRANKLIN

RE: Emergency Sheltering in COVID-19 Environment

GLOUCESTER

Dear Governor Northam:

HAMPTON

On behalf of the 17 local government managers and administrators in the Hampton Roads region, we request the Commonwealth of Virginia's assistance to help our local governments plan and prepare for emergency sheltering operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ISLE OF WIGHT

JAMES CITY

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 public health emergency in early March, the 17 local government Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) in our region have coordinated through the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) to hold conference calls three times per week to align efforts to respond to and slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus in our region. We want to thank the Commonwealth of Virginia for the assistance provided to our local governments during this difficult time, and look forward to continuing our working relationship with our State partners as we work to prevent the spread of this virus.

NEWPORT NEWS

NORFOLK

POQUOSON

PORTSMOUTH

With hurricane season now upon us, we have also held regional conversations to discuss how our region would provide emergency sheltering in a COVID-19 environment should a hurricane or tropical storm threaten our region. In the event of a hurricane impacting the Hampton Roads area, there are over 280,000 residents within the highest evacuation risk zone (Zone A). Some of these residents will require emergency shelter, and we must be prepared to provide our residents safe and secure shelter options that address public health issues related to the COVID-19 environment.

SMITHFIELD

SOUTHAMPTON

SUFFOLK

SURRY

To achieve this goal, our region's CAOs and emergency management professionals have discussed potential strategies, and respectfully request the State's assistance and collaboration in the following areas:

VIRGINIA BEACH

WILLIAMSBURG

- We request that the State adjust the timeline for opening a state-managed shelter to be consistent with the opening of local shelters.

YORK

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- We ask that the State begin identifying additional resources for shelter staff. Many localities have buildings that can serve as shelters, but lack the staff to operate them. Regularly, this gap could possibly be filled with state staff. However, if State shelters are opened simultaneously, the State will need to bring in additional resources via the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) or Statewide Mutual Aid (SMA).
- We would like to partner with the State on securing large-scale hotel contracts which could streamline the operations of non-congregate sheltering and assist our localities' efforts to receive cost reimbursement.
- We request that the State fund and execute COVID-19 Point Prevalence Screenings (PPS) in the shelters.
- We also request enhanced collaboration regarding messaging related to emergency sheltering during this hurricane season.

The experiences and challenges we have all experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic have heightened our awareness regarding the impacts that hurricane season and sheltering challenges can have on our most vulnerable populations. We respectfully ask for your careful consideration of our requests to ensure we can develop a sheltering plan that addresses the needs of all residents in the Hampton Roads region.

Thank you in advance for your continued support and cooperation. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Robb Braidwood, Chesapeake Emergency Management Coordinator or Bob Crum, Executive Director of the HRPDC and Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization.

Submitted by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission Chief Administrative Officers Committee.



Mary Bunting, Chair
Hampton City Manager



Patrick Roberts, Vice Chair
Suffolk City Manager

copy: Curtis Brown, State Coordinator of Emergency Management
CAO Committee Members
All Hazard Advisory Committee
HRPDC Membership