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For Immediate Release

Elbert County Declares a Local Emergency for COVID-19 Response

KIOWA, CO — On March 16, 2020, Elbert County Commissioners approved a resolution declaring a local disaster emergency in Elbert County, Colorado. This follows the State of Colorado's declaration of a state of disaster emergency on March 10, and is due to the need for urgency in responding to the emergence of COVID-19 statewide.

Today, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's (CDPHE) state lab identified the first three presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 in Elbert County. The presumptive positive cases are:

Case #1: Male, teens

Case #2: Female, 30s

Case #3: Male, 30s

Elbert County Government's mission is to provide essential statutory services and supportive infrastructure to our citizens in a professional, respectful, and cost-effective manner. In light of the emergency, it is critical to protect the health and safety of our employees and our citizens.

Based on recommendations from the state and federal governments, and our analysis of the current local situation, Elbert County's offices may reduce staffing as needed until state and local public health and emergency management personnel advise the Board of County Commissioners that it is prudent to resume normal operations.

Elbert County Commissioner and Board Chair Chris Richardson elaborates: "This declaration allows Elbert County to tap into a broad array of state and federal resources to mitigate, respond, and recover from potential effects of COVID-19. Commissioners, elected officials, and staff share a single focus – to reduce the opportunities for infection to spread, and to safeguard our citizens and employees while still providing essential services."

Nearly all functions of County government will continue to be conducted using phone, email, fax, U.S. mail, or online tools in order to limit potential for person-to-person transmission. First responders and essential personnel, such as Sheriff's deputies and Road & Bridge employees, will continue to conduct their regular duties, incorporating practices to limit the possible spread of the virus as necessary. Other employees may be conducting their regular work remotely rather than from their County offices. Please refer to the County's website at elbertcounty-co.gov for details on how to contact County offices.

Commissioner Richardson adds "I speak for all three Commissioners when I say that our County and its citizens are strong, self-reliant, resilient, and responsible. I have total confidence in our County employees and their leadership to respond to this situation. No

matter what the hazard, Elbert County is at its best when we face adversity together. Let's look out for one another and please know that we are working as a team with other local agencies to provide nothing short of excellence in this current situation."

This is a very fluid situation, so please refer to the County's website and official social media pages for current status updates.

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A Resolution Declaring a Local Disaster Emergency

In Elbert County, Colorado

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus that originated in China and has since spread to numerous countries around the world, including the United States; and

WHEREAS, the virus may cause serious illness or death in certain cases, particularly where the elderly and persons with underlying health conditions contract it; and

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 a "public health emergency of international concern;" and the federal government declared a national emergency on March 13, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of Colorado declared a state of disaster emergency on March 10, 2020 in response to the growing outbreak, and other Colorado counties including Douglas and El Paso Counties have declared disaster emergencies based a variety of factors including the numbers of cases within their borders; and

WHEREAS, while Elbert County Public Health and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment have confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the County; public health experts anticipate that, due to the contagiousness of the illness, Elbert County will begin to see additional cases of the virus and its transmission within the community; and

WHEREAS, Elbert County anticipates that without appropriately responding to the illness, numbers of cases within the County may rise, and may result in serious illness or death for certain members of the community, and also may have the effect of interrupting the functioning of the community in terms of work attendance, school attendance, and the like; and

WHEREAS, the cost and magnitude of responding to and recovering from the impact of the ensuing event is far in excess of the county's available resources; and

WHEREAS, Colorado law provides for declaring a local disaster emergency to assist local governments in responding to and recovering from emergency events, including epidemics; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-709(1) "A local disaster may be declared only by the principal executive officer of a political subdivision. It shall not be continued or renewed in excess seven days except by or with the consent of the governing board of the political subdivision"; and

WHEREAS, C.R.S. § 24-33.5-709(2) continues to say "The effect of a declaration of local disaster emergency is to activate the response and recovery aspects of any and all applicable local and interjurisdictional disaster and emergency plans and to authorize the furnishing of aid and assistance under such plans;" and

WHEREAS, the Elbert County Emergency Manager and Public Health Administrator have recommended that the Board declare a local disaster; and



WHEREAS, it would be appropriate and in the interests of the public health and safety for the Board to implement said recommendation; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-709 and the emergency operations plan and the Delegation of Authority Resolution of Elbert County, Colorado, the Board is authorized to declare a local disaster.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. It is hereby determined and declared that the presence of the COVID-19 virus in Elbert County, the State of Colorado, and surrounding counties constitutes a local disaster emergency that warrants the mobilizing of emergency response and the furnishing of aid and assistance.
2. This Declaration shall be promptly filed with the Elbert County Clerk and Recorder and with the Colorado Office of Emergency Management.
3. This Declaration shall remain in effect for a period of seven (7) days unless continued or renewed in excess of this time period by action of the Board of County Commissioners for Elbert County.
4. This Declaration is necessary for the public health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the County of Elbert, State of Colorado.
5. This resolution shall be effective upon the date and time given below, and shall remain in effect for a period not to exceed seven (7) days thereafter except by or with the consent of a majority of the members of the Board. True copies will be filed promptly with the Department of Public Safety, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management, Office of Emergency Management and the Elbert County Clerk and Recorder, and shall be promptly distributed to the appropriate representatives of the news media.

SIGNED AND EFFECTIVE at Kiowa, Colorado this 16th day of March, 2020.

Elbert County Board of County Commissioners

By: 

Chris Richardson, Chair, Elbert County Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST: Elbert County Clerk & Recorder

By: Amanda W. Moose
Deputy Clerk to the Board

