



State to Main

The Voice of Vermont Business



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In This Issue:

- [Governor Scott Outlines Phased Restart of Vermont Economy](#)
- [Governor Scott Establishes Economic Recovery Task Force](#)
- [Senate Reviews Potential Changes to Workers' Compensation](#)
- [House Committee Considers 3-Month Budget Bill](#)
- [Paycheck Protection Program Runs Dry](#)
- [USDOL to Host Webinar on Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#)
- [In Case You Missed It](#)

Governor Scott Outlines Phased Restart of Vermont Economy

Governor Phil Scott today outlined an approach for the phased restart of Vermont's economy. Effective on April 20, outdoor businesses and construction operations with crews of two or less and some single-person low contact professional services can operate if specified safety requirements are met. An addendum to an earlier Executive Order also institutes new health and safety requirements and encourages the public to wear cloth face coverings. Vermont Chamber staff are closely tracking updates related to COVID-19 that impact businesses and employers and communicating them swiftly with Chamber members and the public on a comprehensive COVID-19 Resources page.

Governor Scott Establishes Economic Recovery Task Force

Governor Phil Scott announced the establishment of the Vermont Economic Mitigation & Recovery Task Force this week. The task force is largely comprised of business and community leaders who will work with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to assist in providing financial and technical support for businesses, local support and community action planning, and planning for the safe reopening of economic sectors. Among those named to the task force are several Vermont Chamber members, including Bill Shouldice, President and CEO of Vermont Teddy Bear Company, Chair of the Vermont Futures Project, and member of the Vermont Chamber Board of Directors.

Senate Reviews Potential Changes to Workers' Compensation

After reviewing actions taken by other states, the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs reviewed draft legislation that would

implement temporary changes to workers' compensation. The legislation would provide the Department of Labor with authority during the state of emergency related to COVID-19 to amend or waive certain requirements and deadlines under current workers' compensation law and to provide a presumption that medical workers and workers with routine contact with members of the public are entitled to workers' compensation.

House Committee Considers 3-Month Budget Bill

At the request of the House Committee on Ways and Means, the Joint Fiscal Office is exploring the option of a 3-month stopgap spending bill that would allow the State to operate a budget through September, with the Legislature returning in August or September to finalize the bill. Due to federal and state deferrals of many tax obligations until mid-July, budgetary forecasts cannot be accurately determined until after the new July 15 tax deadlines. If advanced, the stopgap funding measure would provide financial resources in the interim. Revenue shortfalls are currently anticipated in several areas, including the Education Fund.

Paycheck Protection Program Runs Dry

Vermont businesses have raced to access the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), with Vermont ranking third in the nation for the amount of PPP awarded per capita. As of Thursday, employers who have not finalized an application will need to wait until Congress allocates additional funding before loans can be accessed. In anticipation of a shortfall in funding, the Vermont Chamber sent a letter to Vermont's congressional delegation last week requesting additional funds for the program. Congressional leaders are currently debating the framework for the next round of funding to supplement the program and possible additional guidelines for how the funds are utilized.

USDOL to Host Webinar on Families First Coronavirus Response Act

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) was signed into law on March 18, 2020, and requires certain employers to provide employees with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for reasons related to COVID-19. USDOL will host a FFCRA webinar on Monday, April 20, at 9 a.m. Presentations will highlight the requirements of FFCRA as well as some of the included benefits for businesses. Steven McKinney, a Community Outreach Specialist for the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division, will lead the presentation and following Q&A session.

In Case You Missed It

[Scott Announces First 'Small Steps' in Reopening Vermont Businesses](#)

[Vermont to Join Multi-State Effort to Coordinate Coronavirus Recovery](#)

[White House Unveils Coronavirus Guidelines on Path to Reopening the Country](#)

Leahy Named to Trump's Council to Reopen U.S. Economy

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In business since 1912, the Vermont Chamber of Commerce is a private, not-for-profit business organization with 1,500 members employing 45,000 people and representing all sectors of the state's economy. Our mission is to create an economic climate conducive to business growth and the preservation of the Vermont quality of life. Copyright ©2018 The Vermont Chamber of Commerce. All Rights Reserved.

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