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Social Gatherings of 10 People or More Are Banned

Vacation Rental Home Owners May Be Impacted by MD Governor's Orders

March 20, 2020, Oakland, MD -- Governor Larry Hogan's Executive Order released yesterday concerning Social Gatherings has given Marylanders a clear directive that any social grouping of more than 10 people is banned. The order is the latest in a series of changes being made to increase social distancing in an attempt to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Social Distancing is a way to keep people from interacting closely or frequently enough to spread an infectious disease.

A section of the Governor's order specifically states, "Social, community, spiritual, religious, recreational, leisure, and sporting gatherings and events ("large gatherings and events") of more than 10 people are hereby prohibited at all locations and venues, including but not limited to parades, festivals, conventions, and fundraisers."

Thus, the Executive Order requires that rentals be cancelled for all rental properties that sleep 10 or more persons.

The Board of Commissioners for Garrett County encourage all vacation rentals be cancelled, whether through rental companies, Air BnB/VBRO or private individuals.

Locally, Garrett County Health Department and The Board of Garrett County Commissioners have been working with the vacation rental businesses to minimize the potential impact of the COVID-19 virus on their employees and on our community.

Safety for everyone living and/or working in Garrett County is of the utmost importance.

The strategies that are being employed by the rental industry to minimize impact of this pandemic are as follows:

- not accepting new reservations for the upcoming weeks
- working diligently to move existing reservations to alternate dates
- proactively enhancing policies and procedures to protect their staff.

"We want to thank the rental agencies for what they have already done to protect their employees and customers against the spread of the deadly Coronavirus," said Garrett County Health Officer Bob Stephens. "I am aware that you have been taking precautions, and I am very pleased with your proactive measures to date to protect not only your employees and customers but also the general public."

Information and updates about COVID-19 in Garrett County and around the world are available at <https://www.garrettcountry.org/commissioners/coronavirus>. Residents can also call the Health Department COVID-19 Hotline at 301-334-7698.

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About Garrett County Government: The County is governed by an elected Board of County Commissioners (the "Board"), whose three members serve four-year terms and must live in the District which they represent. The Board may exercise only such powers as are conferred by the General Assembly of Maryland. The County is administered under a line organizational method, with the County Administrator responsible for overseeing the financial planning, annual budget process, personnel management, and direction and management of operations within the organization.