

North Carolina Legislative Update May 7, 2020

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The General Assembly wrapped up a brief session last week, ending Saturday evening. The session focused on providing relief in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They passed two bills, one focusing on policy changes and the other appropriating money primarily from the Federal Government aid package to help with the pandemic. This session saw legislators utilize virtual committee meetings and relaxed voting measures that allow members more time to vote, or to vote through the majority or minority leader by proxy, without being present.

The Speaker of the House, Tim Moore, and the President Pro Tem of the Senate, Phil Berger agreed that they would hold skeleton sessions until the legislature reconvened on May 18, 2020 to hold a normal session and pass further COVID-19 relief provisions.

The House indicated the House Select Committee on COVID19 will continue having virtual meetings to vet additional needs and concerns between now and May 18th. The Senate has not indicated they will hold any public meetings in the meantime.

Governor Cooper signed both bills into law on Tuesday, May 5th. Here is a link to the two bills that have become law.

<https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2019/Bills/House/PDF/H1043v7.pdf>

<https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2019/Bills/Senate/PDF/S704v6.pdf>

On Tuesday at 5:00 p.m., Governor Cooper issued Executive Order No. 138 which eased restrictions on the State of North Carolina transitioning from the stay-at-home mandate to Phase 1. The new Phase 1 goes into effect on May 8th, at 5:00 p.m.

The Order, among other things:

- Allows retail businesses to open under certain restrictions, such as operating at 50% of the normal capacity, requiring customers to stand six feet apart, performing frequent cleanings, providing hand sanitizers if possible and screening workers for COVID-19 symptoms.

- People are now allowed to leave their homes for commercial activities, such as shopping at the newly opened retail stores, as well as visiting essential businesses such as grocery stores.
- Bars, personal care businesses such as barber shops, entertainment venues, and gyms will remain closed.
- Restaurants will continue to be restricted to drive thru, takeout, and delivery services. The General Assembly failed to modify the law which would have allowed takeout cocktails in addition to beer and wine.
- Outdoor gatherings of 10 or fewer people are permitted.
- Childcare facilities and summer day camps can open under strict cleaning guidelines.
- Retirement and senior living homes will remain closed to outside visitors.
- People are allowed to visit state parks and trails, but playground equipment will remain closed.
- People are also allowed to travel to places of worship, but social distancing practices must be used.

Phase 1 is expected to continue until May 22nd, when Phase 2 will come into effect, if the conditions still warrant.

More about our North Carolina Public Policy Team

In addition to providing Government Affairs Services, the Nexsen Pruet Public Policy team provides attorneys and clients with a newsletter summarizing the week's activities and conveying the inner workings of the legislative process and state government in Raleigh during the legislative session. Please feel free to pass this along to your clients or other interested parties. If you would like to receive the update in your inbox, please [click here to sign up](#). If you are interested in learning more about how Nexsen Pruet can help you achieve your public policy goals and acquiring legislative representation in North Carolina or South Carolina, please reach out.