

ORDINANCE 2020-08

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING A NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY DUE TO COVID-19 (NOVEL CORONAVIRUS DISEASE); CLOSING BEACHES WITHIN WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND PROVIDING AN END DATE.**

**WHEREAS**, Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a severe acute respiratory illness that can spread among humans through respiratory transmission and other potential methods, and presents symptoms similar to those of influenza;

**WHEREAS**, in December of 2019, a new and substantial outbreak of COVID-19 emerged in Wuhan, China, and has since spread rapidly throughout the world, including the United States, and more specifically Walton County and other Counties in the State of Florida;

**WHEREAS**, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic;

**WHEREAS**, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19;

**WHEREAS**, a National State of Emergency was declared by the President of the United States on March 13, 2020;

**WHEREAS**, a State of Emergency for the State of Florida was declared by the Governor by Executive Order 20-51 (March 1, 2020), 20-51 (March 9, 2020), and 20-68 (March 17, 2020), authorizing in accordance with Section 252.38, Florida Statutes, each political subdivision within the State to “waive the procedures and formalities otherwise required of the political subdivision by law pertaining to... [the] (p)erformance of public work and taking whatever prudent action to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community;

**WHEREAS**, the Walton County Board of County Commissioners declared a Local State of Emergency on March 16, 2020;

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 125.66(3), Florida Statutes, the Board of County Commissioners may declare an emergency exists and that immediate enactment of an Emergency Ordinance is necessary;

**WHEREAS**, the Walton County Board of County Commissioners declares that an emergency exists due to the overwhelming crowds on the beaches of Walton County, that such crowding is likely to lead to the spread of COVID-19, and that immediate enactment of an Emergency Ordinance temporarily closing the beaches in Walton County is necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19;

**WHEREAS**, the Walton County Board of County commissioners expressly declares that the temporary closure of beaches due to the public health emergency arising from the COVID-19 pandemic shall not be construed as an abandonment of the public's right to use the dry sand areas of the beaches.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED** by the Board of County Commissioners of Walton County, Florida, as follows:

1. All beaches within Walton County, Florida, are temporarily CLOSED to the public.
2. It shall be unlawful for members of the public to access the beaches within Walton County.
3. Beach shall have the same definition as contained in Chapter 22, Walton County Waterways and Beach Activities Ordinance. Words not defined in this Ordinance shall be given their common and ordinary meaning.
4. A violation of this Ordinance shall constitute a criminal offense and shall be punishable as provided in Section 252.50, Florida Statutes.
5. If any portion of this Ordinance is determined by any Court to be invalid, the invalid portion shall be stricken, and such striking shall not affect the validity of the remainder of this Ordinance. If any Court determines that this Ordinance, or any portion hereof, cannot be legally applied to any individual(s), group(s), entity(ies), property(ies), or circumstance(s), such determination shall not affect the applicability hereof to any other individual, group, entity, property, or circumstance.
6. This Ordinance shall become effective immediately and shall be in effect for thirty (30) days, unless extended by the Walton County Board of County Commissioners.

**PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED** in emergency session by the Walton County Board of County Commissioners, this 19<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2020.

Attest:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA

*for*  
Dani Cordero  
Alex Alford, Clerk of Court  
and County Comptroller



Bill Chapman  
W. N. "Bill" Chapman, Chair