

**CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2020-27**

**DECLARING AN ECONOMIC DISASTER IN THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA  
DUE TO COVID-19 AND POOR REGIONAL RETURNS OF ALL SALMON SPECIES**

**WHEREAS**, Sitka has five seafood processing plants which operate seasonally each year; and

**WHEREAS**, the Municipal Administrator of the City and Borough of Sitka on March 15, 2020 issued a Declaration of Disaster Emergency due to COVID-19 in Sitka; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 21, 2020 the President of the United States issued Disaster Declaration No. 16386, Disaster No. AK-00046, freeing up economic assistance through the Small Business Administrator for businesses impacted by COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, numerous federal and state economic programs have been established for business assistance due to impacts from COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, the City and Borough of Sitka has nine different grant programs for businesses and agencies to help mitigate the economic impacts of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, the June 2020 Sitka Business Climate and COVID-19 Impacts Survey revealed Sitka business revenue was down 60% in 2020 through June, compared to the same period in 2019; and

**WHEREAS**, the June 2020 Sitka Business Climate and COVID-19 Impacts Survey also revealed that 22% of respondents said that they are at risk of closing permanently; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2020 Southeast Jobs COVID Impacts Report, issued August 21, 2020 confirms Sitka has an 8.9% unemployment rate as compared to 3.4% in 2019; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2020 Southeast Jobs COVID Impacts Report also outlines the regional change in Southeast jobs from April to July 2020 compared to 2019 including a 50% drop in Transportation jobs; a 38% decline in Leisure and Hospitality jobs; and loss of 27% in Seafood Processing jobs; and an 11% reduction in Retail jobs; and

**WHEREAS**, Southeast Alaska, including Sitka is enduring the complete cancellation of the summer cruise season, the impact of which Sitka is a loss of an estimated 210,400 cruise ship passengers with an estimated loss of \$74 million dollars to the local economy.

**WHEREAS**, Southeast Alaska, including Sitka is enduring the loss of independent tourists due to COVID 19, the impact of which Sitka is a loss of an estimated 46,185 independent visitors with an estimated additional loss of \$10 million dollars to the local economy.

**WHEREAS**, though the fishing season has not yet concluded, reports from the Commercial Fishing Fleet indicate an abysmal year for salmon returns in the region, along with a significant drop in the prices paid to fishermen by processors; and

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 Pandemic and related economic impacts are expected to continue for the foreseeable future; and

**WHEREAS**, poor regional salmon returns suggest the fishing season could be worse than 2016 when a Presidential Disaster Declaration for the Pink Salmon fishery was issued.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska, that:

1. An Economic Disaster is hereby declared in the City and Borough of Sitka, due to COVID-19 and Poor Regional Returns of All Salmon Species.
2. The State of Alaska and United States Secretary of Commerce are hereby urged to issue two Economic Disaster Declarations:
  - a. 2020 Statewide Tourism Disaster resulting from the COVID-19 Pandemic; and
  - b. 2020 Southeast Alaska Salmon Fisheries Disaster resulting from poor returns and harvests of all salmon species.

**EFFECTIVE DATE AND DURATION.** This resolution shall be effective immediately after its adoption.

**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED** by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska on this 22nd day of September 2020.

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Gary L. Paxton, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Sara Peterson, MMC  
Municipal Clerk

1<sup>st</sup> and final reading 9/22/2020

Sponsor: Administrator