

CEQA Update: No Change to Administrative Deadlines, Noticing, or Filing Requirements Following Governor Newsom's 'Stay at Home' Order

On March 24, 2020, the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research ("OPR") [announced](#) that "[a]t this time, there has been no change to the deadlines, noticing, or filing requirements contained within CEQA." OPR also announced that the California State Clearinghouse, the office that coordinates state-level review of CEQA documents, will be operating every weekday between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. However, temporary court closures throughout the state may extend deadlines to file legal actions that challenge agency actions under CEQA.

OPR's announcement came only five days after California Governor Gavin Newsom and the Director of the California Department of Public Health [ordered all Californians to stay home](#). Over the last several weeks, some local agencies have suspended public hearings for new project applications, and some planning departments are not accepting new applications at this time. (See, e.g., the [City of Los Angeles](#) and the [City of Santa Cruz](#).) Some county clerks have also stopped posting CEQA notices for public review. (See, e.g., the Contra Costa County Clerk's Office [as of April 1, [the most recent CEQA notice is dated March 9](#)].)

Developers and public stakeholders should carefully monitor state and local agency closures to determine whether those closures will impact relevant CEQA deadlines. If local ordinances set time limits for certifying environmental impact reports or adopting negative declarations, those local ordinances may "provide for a reasonable extension of the time period in the event that compelling circumstances justify additional time and the project applicant consents thereto." (Pub. Resources Code, § 21151.5, subd. (a)(4).) Lead agencies should also carefully consider whether COVID-19-related closures prevent members of the public from meaningfully participating in CEQA's public review processes.

For more information regarding COVID-19 and its impacts on environmental and land use permitting, please visit [Hanson Bridgett's COVID-19 Resource Center](#).

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