

GOV. LAMONT & DECD COMMISSIONER LEHMAN'S TELE-TOWN HALL

SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

3/19/2020 1:00pm

The recorded session can be accessed at the link below.

<https://m.soundcloud.com/user-172224498-352041663/connecticut-covid-19-conference-call-with-governor-lamont-ct-decd>

SUMMARY:

Governor Lamont, DECD Commissioner Lehman, Deputy DECD Commissioner Thames, OPM Secretary Melissa McCaw

Overview from Governor Lamont:

- Payroll tax credits not first priority – benefits are too far out for most businesses
- Working to address fixed costs first and foremost
- Encouraging businesses to try and work with landlords on rent
- Talking to health insurance providers to see if payments may be deferred
- Negotiating with utilities companies and Attorney General. Utilities have agreed to halt shutoffs for residential and commercial customers for the time being
- DOL relaxed several requirements for unemployment
 - Shared work programs available
 - Significantly increase in volume
 - Hours increased, manpower reallocated to help address high demand
- SBA loans available
- DECD Payment relief & forbearance
 - 3month payment relief for businesses in small business express & other similar programs
- Banking Dept encouraging lenders to work with businesses on delaying payments where possible
- Tax relief – CT pass through entity tax/corporate business tax delayed to June 15th
- Individual income tax return delays being put into place
- Temporary regulatory relief being put into place
- Paid federal sick leave – affords employers with less than 500 employees 2 weeks paid sick leave, up to 12 weeks family medical leave – govt picks up tab. Final details still being put reviewed, signed into law by President on 3.18
- Federal action will likely be the first of several steps feds take

DECD response:

- Covid-19 Business Emergency Response Unit to help businesses navigate resources and put together new resources. Survey created
 - 860-500-2333
 - Covid19.jic@ct.gov
- Payment relief & forbearance program
- SBA disaster loan funds; DECD team working to help navigate bureaucratic issues as they arise

Q&A SESSION

- 1) Will any tax payments be deferred to help with short term expenses?
 - a. Payments delayed, further action being discussed but no decisions made yet
- 2) Is there a one stop shop resource for small businesses?
 - a. Email covid19.jic@ct.gov
 - b. Small business hotline 860-500-2333
- 3) Is there a difference between SBA loan and CT bridge loans
 - a. Decd bridge loan program being finalized, lower interest rates, short term (up to 12mos)
 - b. SBA loans 3.75% up to 30years
- 4) Consideration of getting banks to delay CHESLA payments?
 - a. Forbearance programs in place
- 5) Consideration of getting banks to delay payments?
 - a. Encouraging banks to be flexible, not something that can be mandated, just encouraged
- 6) Likelihood of shutting down non-essential businesses?
 - a. Non essential businesses encouraged to let employees stay home/telework to delay spread
 - b. Staying out of groups most important
 - c. Barbershops/salons being closed soon
- 7) Delay/deferment of local property taxes?
 - a. Local decision
- 8) Any more executive orders for businesses closing/regulations?
 - a. Yes, more to come. Specifically, to allow for more assistance from nurses, daycares
- 9) Availability of PPE?
 - a. Have orders in, sourcing PPE/ventilators worldwide, working with hospitals
 - b. Delay elective surgery/non essential medical visits to free up equipment/beds
- 10) How can businesses be helpful/offer resources, etc
 - a. Use covid19.jic@ct.gov to offer donations/space
- 11) How quickly will loan program be available?
 - a. Bridge loan to be announced in detail on Monday, goal is to cover 3mos operating expenses
- 12) Can restaurants offer alcohol to go?
 - a. Delivery not yet; being discussed
 - b. Alcohol is able to be sold to go
- 13) How is CT partnering with the Feds for small businesses?
 - a. Weekly phone call with VP
 - b. Governors working in concert to coordinate responses, especially tri-state region
- 14) Can non-profits be reimbursed for FMLA?
 - a. Need to confirm, believe yes
- 15) When will a bill be put forth to legislature?
 - a. Hoping within a week, administration is in close contact with legislative leaders
- 16) Considering closing down manufacturing businesses?
 - a. Not currently. Encouraging them to take heed of CDC guidelines on hygiene, social distancing. Trying to lessen economic impact as much as possible while keeping public health as top priority
- 17) If a business has already sent their check in for small business express before delay was put into place can a check be cancelled?
 - a. Contact DRS
- 18) Is there a list of "essential/non-essential"?
 - a. In private industry, up to managers.
- 19) Should contractors consider shutting down job sites?
 - a. Not at this time. Take precautions of CDC guidance, avoid large groups, etc
- 20) Is there a target date to lift closure of restaurants/bars etc?

- a. Nothing definitive. Will depend on the continued spread, concerned of second wave
- 21) Can Gov/CBIA help facilitate business communication?
 - a. Working to spread info to associations, chambers, advocacy groups
- 22) Statewide shutdown being considered?
 - a. Not necessary right now as towns/businesses/individuals have been responding to social distancing guidelines
- 23) Will small business benefits be afforded to nonprofits?
 - a. SBA loan funds, yes
 - b. Generally yes, DECD
- 24) Is there a place on ct website with SBA loan info?
 - a. www.ct.gov/coronavirus has information and links