



## COUNTY OF LAKE

### Board of Supervisors

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**MOKE SIMON**  
District 1 Supervisor

### **PRESS RELEASE** **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Taking Determinative Local Action**

*County Insights from Moke Simon, Chair of the Board of Supervisors*

**LAKE COUNTY, CA (May 8, 2020)** – Tuesday’s (May 5) meeting of the Lake County Board of Supervisors brought signs of progress in the effort to enable Lake County-focused solutions to serve Lake County’s communities as we proceed through COVID-19 recovery. Self-reliance is a strong value in rural counties, and we embody that, in many respects.

Since the early days of the crisis, Governor Newsom has regularly remarked, “Localism is determinative.” Yet, where rubber and road have come to meet, State Public Health Orders have been broadly construed and highly restrictive. Many Lake County residents and businesses facing relatively low COVID-19 risk have been severely affected by constraints that seemed to better suit areas with greater population density, like San Francisco and Sacramento.

Local frustrations have understandably mounted, and public displays of intense sentiment grew in frequency in the days prior to the Board’s meeting. However, collaboration has continued to flourish, as well, with local governments, businesses and non-profit organizations working together to disentangle truly formidable problems.

Moke Simon, District 1 Supervisor and Board Chair, offered some insights following Tuesday’s meeting.

“I live in South Lake County,” began Simon, “and close enough to [Highway 29] that I see traffic coming and going every day. On weekends, [the activity often] increases. There are places in our County, including the Middletown and Hidden Valley Lake areas, that are bedroom communities, and those people regularly travel to areas where viral activity is greater. In both Lake and Mendocino Counties, [confirmed infections] have come from contact with known cases out of the area. If people don’t think the COVID-19 threat is real in Lake County, we’re kidding ourselves. From day one, my concern has been the health and safety of our communities, and reopening our economy will bring more people from out of the area.”

“However,” continued Simon, “we are not Los Angeles. We are not the Bay Area. The level and nature of the risks we are facing is not the same throughout the State of California. There are northern counties that are even more isolated than we are, and have even fewer confirmed cases. [District 2 Supervisor, Bruno Sabatier] has been a leader in the fight for local control, and our whole Board has stepped up to do the advocacy work and get the community input we need to be successful. Now, it is clear that things are changing, and [Lake County’s Public Health Officer, Gary] Pace and our Board, City and Tribal Governments and our many community partners will have important roles to play.”

“We can and we will reopen for business, and we will do it the right way,” emphasized Simon. “With 23% of our population over the age of 65 [compared to approximately 15%, nationally], we will take a measured approach, and ensure our local healthcare system is prepared. Dr. Pace and his team, the Sheriff’s office and [emergency services personnel],

and County and City leaders have faced tough decisions in this crisis, and that will continue to be the case for some time.”

With Extra Item 4.1, District 5 Supervisor, Rob Brown, encouraged the Board to adopt a letter to the Governor, requesting barbers and cosmetologists be permitted to resume business, with precautions in place. Brown expressed openness to barber shops and salons being added to Stage 2 of the Governor’s phased recovery plan, or “At a minimum, [allowing] them to work in private homes.”

Fellow Blue Collar Committee member and District 3 Supervisor, Eddie Crandell, noted he had reached out to other counties, encouraging their Supervisors to take similar action. Melissa Fulton, CEO of the Lake County Chamber of Commerce, expressed support for this letter, and had expressed earlier in the meeting that a local salon owner, Rachel Tyrrell, had proposed a protocol for reopening that was, “Quite extensive,” going well beyond California State Board of Barbering and Cosmetology’s already-stringent pre-COVID requirements. Should Tyrrell’s recommendations be followed, Fulton indicated, “I would feel very safe going into the salons.”

In other business, the Board adopted COVID-19 safety protocols for County-owned buildings. Despite most County offices having closed to the public in March, with essential services provided without in-person contact to the greatest possible extent, the Courthouse and other public spaces continue to see some foot traffic. While not yet a County-wide requirement, masks will be required for service in County buildings, with the caveat that the Courts will establish whatever norms are necessary to facilitate fair and just proceedings.

During Tuesday’s meeting, District 4 Supervisor, Tina Scott, encouraged staff to take an iterative approach, and bear in mind the intent was to protect the public and employees, and noted, “If something’s not working, definitely bring it back to [the Board], so we can figure out what needs to be tweaked.”

“Around 1,000 unique people enter the Courthouse building, alone, each month, so precautions are more than reasonable,” affirmed Simon. “As a couple fellow Board members suggested, this amounts to a ‘No Shirt, No Shoes, No Mask, No Service’ policy, and we sincerely hope people will take this seriously and help keep those around them safe.”

Masks will be provided at front entrances and service counters of County buildings.

Near the close of the meeting, a team led by County Administrative Officer, Carol J. Huchingson, provided a report on the fiscal impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, thus far.

Huchingson recognized deep financial struggles are pervasive among Counties and States in light of COVID-19, but described Lake County’s situation as “unique” in that our County had faced an unparalleled complement of disasters leading into the crisis. Naming eleven distinct disasters that had occurred since 2015, alone, Huchingson credited Cathy Saderlund, who serves as the County’s Auditor-Controller, County Clerk and Disaster Finance Chief, for providing critical leadership in times of crisis, and indicated it was in great measure because of her expertise and guidance the County government was, “still standing.”

Saderlund and Stephen L. Carter, Jr., Deputy County Administrative Officer-Budget Officer, both acknowledged a full picture was impossible to derive from the information available so far. Saderlund noted, “Costs that [could] be identified as COVID” (i.e., total transactions and encumbrances available to the Auditor/Controller’s office, to date that were assignable to COVID-19) totaled \$738,957, to date. Portions of some of these expenditures and encumbrances will be claimed to FEMA, hopefully reimbursed at a rate of 75%, but it is unclear, to date, whether Lake County will receive California Disaster Assistance Act funding, and costs will continue to mount.

Revenues described as very likely to be affected, particularly as the crisis progresses through the fall, included Property Tax Revenues, which provide for 50-55% of the County's discretionary spending. Bradley-Burns 1% Local, Proposition 172 and Realignment 1991 and 2011 Sales tax funds are also expected to take a hit. Saderlund indicated Bradley-Burns revenues, alone, were currently \$490,000 under budget projections. Tourism is also expected to be affected for quite some time, likely signaling suboptimal Transient Occupancy Tax Revenues.

State and local programs designed to assist some of those most affected by the COVID-19 Crisis are straining public resources at every level. On Thursday, Governor Newsom soberly noted \$6 Billion in State surpluses were no longer expected, and tens of billions in deficits were more probable, with assistance from the Federal Government the only apparent immediate way forward.

District 5 Supervisor, Rob Brown, expressed similar sentiments on Tuesday, noting that disasters like wildfires and floods, devastating as they may have been, brought insurance money and jobs related to rebuilding efforts. "We're not going to experience that with this," observed Brown. "It's not going to be an offset, [where] good comes with the bad."

The Chairman acknowledged Brown's concerns, but following the meeting, Moke Simon showed great resolve, and shared, "The effects are going to be long-lasting, but we will continue to move down the road. As long as we can see the future, we can hopefully push in the right direction, toward a positive future. We have been facing this crisis together all along, even though we're physically separate. We will [confront] the next challenges the same way: together."

One thing is clear: local action will be determinative, and Lake County's Board of Supervisors remains ready to face and see beyond the challenges that come.

Live video of all Board of Supervisors meetings, including Dr. Pace's valuable weekly COVID-19 updates, is accessible through the County website and Lake County PEG TV (TV8).

Agendas, including instructions for participating in Board meetings via Zoom, and live and archived video are available at:

<https://countyoflake.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

To comment on any Board of Supervisors Agenda Item, write to the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors by 4pm the day before the meeting, [PublicComment@lakecountyca.gov](mailto:PublicComment@lakecountyca.gov).

Lake County-focused COVID-19 information is accessible through the County's homepage, <http://www.lakecountyca.gov/>, and at <http://health.co.lake.ca.us/>.

If you have public health-related questions about COVID-19, please direct them to [MHOAC@lakecountyca.gov](mailto:MHOAC@lakecountyca.gov), or call Public Health's COVID-19 line, at 707-263-8174.