



***COVID-19 Core Decision Making Team Declaration***  
*Suspension of Public Meetings under the Legislative Procedures Act*  
*March 27, 2020*

The world is currently facing a pandemic of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The COVID-19 outbreak originated in Wuhan, China and has spread to many other countries throughout the world, including the United States. The World Health Organization has identified that the spread of COVID-19 is now a pandemic resulting in many countries experiencing the effects of illness and health issues related to COVID-19 and economic impacts.

On March 12, 2020, Chairman Tehassi Hill signed a “Declaration of Public Health State of Emergency” regarding COVID-19 which set into place the necessary authority should action need to be taken and allows the Nation to seek reimbursement of emergency management actions that may result in unexpected expenses.

On March 17, 2020, the Oneida Business Committee adopted emergency amendments to the Emergency Management and Homeland Security law to create and delegate authority to a COVID-19 Core Decision Making Team (COVID-19 Team). [3 O.C. 302.10]. When a public health emergency has been declared, the COVID-19 Team has the authority to declare exceptions to the Nation’s laws, policies, procedures, regulations, or standard operating procedures during the emergency period which will be of immediate impact for the purposes of protecting the health safety, and general welfare of the Nation’s community, members, and employees. [3 O.C. 302.10-2].

On March 24, 2020, the Nation’s COVID-19 Team made a “Safer at Home” declaration which orders all individuals present within the Oneida Reservation to stay at home or at their place of residence, with certain exceptions allowed. The “Safer at Home” declaration prohibits all public gatherings of any number of people.

The Legislative Procedures Act was adopted by the General Tribal Council to provide a standard process for the adoption of laws of the Nation which takes into account comments and input from members and agencies of the Nation. [1 O.C. 109.1-1, 109.1-2]. The Legislative Procedures Act requires that the Legislative Operating Committee provide a public comment period prior to forwarding the legislation to the Oneida Business Committee or the General Tribal Council for consideration of adoption. [1 O.C. 109.8-1]. The public comment period must include a public meeting presided by at least one (1) member of the Legislative Operating Committee for the purpose of soliciting oral comments on the proposed legislation. [1 O.C. 109.8-3]. After the public meeting occurs, a public comment period where individuals can submit written comments is then held open for at least five (5) business days. [1 O.C. 109.8-1(a)].

Due to the “Safer at Home” declaration, and the potential danger in spreading COVID-19 during a public meeting, the COVID-19 Team hereby declares:

1. The Legislative Procedures Act’s requirement to hold a public meeting during the public comment period is suspended.
2. Individuals may still participate in the legislative process by submitting written comments, questions, data, or input on proposed legislation during the public comment period. An individual

shall submit written comments to the Legislative Operating Committee via e-mail at [LOC@oneidanation.org](mailto:LOC@oneidanation.org).

This declaration shall be made effective immediately and shall remain in effect for the duration of the Nation's public health emergency.

  
Oneida Nation Vice-Chairman