



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **City of Gloucester Temporarily Restricts Access to Public Landings and Boat Ramps**

GLOUCESTER, Mass. (April 16, 2020) – Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken and Public Health Director Karin Carroll report that the City of Gloucester has issued an emergency order to restrict access to public landings and boat ramps amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Gov. Charlie Baker declared a state of emergency in Massachusetts on March 10 in response to the novel coronavirus, and a stay at home advisory is in place statewide through May 4.

City leadership has determined COVID-19 poses a significant danger to the health and wellbeing of residents, and as a result the City has put in place several restrictions in an effort to promote social distancing and reduce spread of the virus in the community. The decision to restrict access, temporarily, to public landings and boat ramps effective Wednesday, April 15 to all recreational boaters is the latest addition to those efforts, and came after significant consideration and discussion among city officials.

Emergency and licensed commercial vessels only may utilize public landings and boat ramps for the time being.

Similar restrictions have been implemented by other area municipalities with public landings and boat ramps as well in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the City is additionally waiting on further guidance from state officials on the matter.

**The restricted access is a temporary measure meant to reduce the possibility of community spread of the virus until the City has implemented safety protocols and policies for the launching of boats, which are currently being developed and will be announced when finalized.**

"This was an incredibly difficult decision, and I'd like to thank our residents for their understanding and patience as we navigate this unprecedented situation," Mayor Romeo Theken said. "Having access to the water is part of the fabric of our community, and restricting access in this way was the last thing we

wanted to do. However, the health and wellbeing of our community must take priority, and once we have developed safety protocols that we feel will keep boaters safe, we will lift this restriction."

The Harbormaster's Office and Board of Health have begun developing new policies and protocols to ensure the safety of Harbormaster personnel and Gloucester boaters, which will be presented to the Waterways Board during an emergency meeting for adoption and further discussion. The date for the meeting will be posted, when available, on the city's website [here](#).

According for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 is believed to spread from close contact, within six feet, when someone infected with the virus coughs, sneezes or talks and releases respiratory droplets into the air. Some studies have also indicated individuals who are not experiencing symptoms of the virus may be spreading the illness.

*Additional updates will be provided as information becomes available.*

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