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City of Duluth Communications Office

Mayor Emily Larson
411 West First Street • Duluth, Minnesota 55802 • www.duluthmn.gov

*For more information contact Kate Van Daele,
Public Information Officer at 218-730-5309*

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SUBJECT: Mayor Emily Larson to let local state of emergency and face-covering requirement expire

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

Mayor Emily Larson to let local state of emergency and face-covering requirement expire

[Duluth, MN] At a press conference on Wednesday, February 9, 2022, Mayor Emily Larson announced that she would let the local state of emergency declaration and face-covering requirement end on its expiration date.

“This declaration expires at 5:00 pm on February 12, and I am not extending it,” Mayor Larson said. “I have based this decision on conversations with health care providers and business groups and by tracking data from Saint Louis County, the State of Minnesota, and Mayo Clinic. Allowing the expiration of the Order means that starting on February 12 at 5:00 pm, businesses and organizations will be back to determining their own course of action as it relates to masking.”

The Mayor thanked the community for their support of public health by respecting the 30-day mask mandate.

“On January 14, I implemented a 30-day mask mandate for all places of public accommodation in the City of Duluth,” Mayor Larson said. “While not convenient or ideal, the mask requirement was intended to help curb the recent surge of COVID-19 infections; to allow our hospitals and staff to fully meet the increased need for care which correlates with the omicron strain, and to support our businesses and schools so they could remain open.”

Businesses and organizations may choose to enact their own policies regarding masks. The City of Duluth will still require masks inside all City buildings for anyone ages two and up. The City of Duluth will continue to track COVID-19 data in the coming weeks and provide any updates if this requirement changes.

“As we lift this order, it’s really important to remember that we are not done with COVID-19,” Mayor Larson said. “People are still getting sick, and some are dying. Some people will get by with no symptoms, and others will require a ventilator. This is still a dangerous time, and it’s important to respect the choices of each workplace, business, and organization that are trying to work through the complications of operating amid a pandemic.”

The Mayor went on to say, “There are still new strains and personal choices as it relates to vaccination. This leaves us all vulnerable and open to future infection and pandemic realities. And to me, that’s another reason to allow this to expire – it’s my personal feeling that we are now moving into not how we beat COVID-19, but how we co-exist with it.”

The Duluth City Council can enact their own determination by an ordinance if they choose to take that on. The next City Council meeting will take place on Monday, February 14, at 7:00 pm.

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