



Supervisor

**Caleb A. Kershner**

Catoctin District



**Loudoun County**  
VIRGINIA



## **New COVID-19 Restrictions & Broadband Update**

Dear Readers,

I wanted to give you this update on two important issues:

- New COVID-19 restrictions that will take effect at midnight on Sunday night.
- Staff will present options to implement our Emergency Broadband Implementation Plan at the Board's business meeting on Tuesday.

Here are the highlights.

## **New COVID-19 Restrictions**

Governor Northam [announced today](#) that he is making several new restrictions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Virginia.

In his announcement, the governor said Virginia is experiencing statewide increases in new COVID-19 cases, percentage of positive test results, and hospitalizations. While he agreed that Virginia is doing better than a number of other states, he believes that enacting these new restrictions now will prevent the health crisis from getting worse.

The new restrictions will take effect at midnight on Sunday night, November 15. Here's a summary of the restrictions as they've been explained so far:

- **Public and private in-person gatherings are now limited to 25 people, instead of 250.** This applies to indoor and outdoor settings.
  - **NOTE:** WTKR [reports that the Governor's office said](#) this limit on gatherings does not apply to religious services or restaurants.
- **Masks are now required in indoor public spaces for everyone age 5 and up, instead of age 10 and up.**
  - **NOTE:** WTKR [also reports that the Governor's office said](#) the masks restriction now applies to private schools.
- **There will be stricter enforcement of social distancing in retail businesses.** Violations will now be enforceable through the Virginia Department of Health as a Class One misdemeanor, rather than just being treated as best practice.
- **There is now an alcohol curfew for restaurants, dining establishments, food courts, breweries, microbreweries, distilleries, wineries, and tasting rooms.** After 10 PM, these establishments will be prohibited from on-site sale, consumption, or possession of alcohol. And they will be required to close by midnight.

The Governor's office [issued a press release](#) that included these details about the new restrictions. We expect the restrictions will be implemented by amending several existing executive orders. Those amendments haven't been published yet, but when they are, you'll be able to find their full text [here on the governor's website](#).

## Broadband Update on November 17

On September 15, I brought an emergency broadband proposal to the Board. That proposal laid out a 6 point plan to speed up the connection of broadband services to Western Loudoun County:

1. **Decrease the cost and processing time for communications infrastructure** by carrying out recommendations and a strategic plan that the Board had approved in 2019 and 2018 (respectively). This would include fast tracking monopole applications, and eliminating or reducing their related SPEX fees.
2. **Expedite provisions of the Dark Fiber Wide Area Network** by partnering with Segra to attract internet service providers and lease our

- network's middle mile fiber access so they can expand their broadband services to rural residences.
3. **Overlay Loudoun County's Wireless Gap Analysis with the Segra Dark Fiber Wide Area Network** to create an active tracking document showing where our future telecommunications projects were being planned, where they were in process, and where they'd been completed.
  4. **Find the funds to complete the buildout** to the Bluemont Community Center, Philomont Community Center, Philomont Fire and Rescue, Loudoun Heights Fire and Rescue, and Loudoun Height Public Safety Radio Tower.
  5. **Identify additional solutions to deploy critical broadband to underserved areas of Loudoun County**, as identified in the 2014 Wireless Gap Analysis, and any other worthwhile solutions that the Board should consider.
  6. **Report back to the Board about the existing cable television franchise agreements**, including their structure, their current status, and what legal options are available to negotiate contracts that will improve broadband access.

The Board voted 8-1 to go forward with this plan. We instructed staff to analyze these six points and report back with detailed options for pursuing and implementing them – and I'm pleased to announce that they are now ready to do that. Staff will present their options to us on Tuesday, November 17. I've linked to the PDF for that business meeting item below.

Date of Meeting: November 17, 2020

**# I-1**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
BUSINESS MEETING  
INFORMATION ITEM**

**SUBJECT:** Response to Board Member Initiative: Emergency Broadband Implementation Plan

**ELECTION DISTRICTS:** Blue Ridge/Catoctin

**CRITICAL ACTION DATE:** At the pleasure of the Board

**STAFF CONTACT(S):** Charles Yudd, County Administration  
Erin McLellan, County Administration

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the item is to respond to the Board Member Initiative presented at the September 15<sup>th</sup> Board Business Meeting regarding the deployment of broadband to underserved and unserved areas of Western Loudoun County as identified in the 2014 Wireless Gap Analysis.

**BACKGROUND:** On September 15, 2020, Supervisors Kershner and Buffington presented information to the Board of Supervisors (Board) regarding the lack of adequate broadband coverage in Western Loudoun County. The item stated that "the need for broadband service to Western Loudoun is well-documented and has been a struggle for Loudoun County for many

[Read the Staff Report](#)

Sincerely,

***Supervisor Caleb A. Kershner***

*Catoctin District Supervisor  
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors  
Loudoun County, Virginia*

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