

March 3, 2020

ECIA's Update on Government's Response to the Coronavirus

Robin B. Gray, Jr., ECIA's Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel, participated in a webinar March 2, hosted by the White House regarding the coronavirus. The webinar featured numerous senior officials from the WH, CDC, Homeland Security, State, DOT, HHS, and Treasury. This event was by invitation only to industry leaders and specifically excluded press. The purpose of the conference call was to answer questions from employers that the federal government has been receiving about the disease. There was no Q&A.

The theme which was stated repeatedly was: local governments execute, state governments manage, and the federal government supports. The upshot is that most decisions, such as school closings and city quarantines, are left to the local and state governments to decide.

There were many take-aways:

- Virus easily spreads, often before symptoms appear
- Avoid work-related exposures—stay home if sick or if family member sick
- Spread by close contact, which is defined as within 6 ft
- CDC and State Dept. update travel advisories daily, so people should check daily if traveling
- International travel may be problem because a country may suddenly impose quarantine, excessive screening or other methods that may delay travel.
- Containment policy no longer working so governments moving to mitigation phase which focuses on teleworking, school closings and other measures.
- Big focus by government on protecting healthcare and its supply chain
- Federal government may expand travel restrictions beyond China, Italy, Korea, Iran—expect continued disruption of international travel
- Suggested moving large conferences to later in the year. (While not specifically stated, my impression is that large gatherings are being discouraged.)
- Emphasis--Decision to restrict or cancel conferences a local decision.
- **Federal government focuses on keeping commerce moving. There are no travel restrictions on cargo flights and cargo ships coming from China and other infected areas.**
- Employers should quarantine employees coming back from infected countries. If employee sick, employers should require employee to stay home.
- State Dept. has travel advisory called Smart Travel Enrollment Program ([STEP](#)). If you travel abroad, enroll in order to receive automatic travel alerts. Expect travel consequences if local governments take action.
- Federal government may, if necessary, impose precautions on local travel.
- Federal government working on ways to minimize impact on supply chains and impact on economy.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has posted [interim guidelines](#) for business and employers and will update as needed and as additional information becomes available.

ECIA will continue to provide timely updates as they become available. Register for a [market update webinar](#) with ECIA's Chief Analyst Dale Ford this Friday, March 6 at 11:00 AM Eastern. Dale will look at the state of the market and address what we know at this point about COVID-19 and its impact on the electronics components supply chain.