



Administrative Office of the Courts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jury trials in criminal and civil cases to resume in New Mexico

SANTA FE – Jury trials can resume starting next month subject to approval by the New Mexico Supreme Court of plans by courts for protecting the public health and safety as courthouse operations expand.

An order issued today by the Supreme Court lifts the suspension on jury trials in criminal and civil cases that has been in place since March. Courts may resume jury trials between June 15 and July 15.

“As our state gradually reopens, courts can safely resume jury trials as local conditions permit,” said Chief Justice Judith K. Nakamura. “Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, New Mexico courts have worked diligently to protect the health of people entering a courthouse. In resuming jury trials, our courts will rigorously follow COVID-safe practices developed by public health authorities.”

Before courts can recommence jury trials, the chief judge in the judicial district must submit individualized plans for Supreme Court approval that detail the operating procedures and precautions implemented for courts in that district. These include steps for safeguarding jurors, lawyers, witnesses and others during a trial, how to maintain minimum 6-foot physical distancing of people in courtrooms and jury selection rooms, and the use of plexiglass dividers and other protective barriers in a courthouse.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, courts have implemented safety measures recommended by the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) to minimize the risk of exposure to the coronavirus. These include:

- Requiring masks and protective face coverings for anyone entering a court building.
- Health screening of courthouse visitors, including temperature checks, to determine whether they exhibit possible coronavirus symptoms.
- Limiting the number of people in locations throughout a courthouse to ensure proper social distancing.
- Frequent cleaning and disinfecting in judicial buildings, especially high-touch surfaces such as doors, tables, counters and courthouse seating.

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1 **IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO**

2 **May 28, 2020**

3 **NO. 20-8500-019**

4 **IN THE MATTER OF**
5 **EXTENDING THE TIME TO PAY**
6 **CERTAIN FINES AND FEES DURING THE**
7 **COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

8 **ORDER**

9 WHEREAS, this Court recognizing the need to provide additional time to
10 pay certain fines and fees assessed in district, metropolitan, magistrate, and
11 municipal court cases in light of the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency
12 and being sufficiently advised, Chief Justice Judith K. Nakamura, Justice Barbara
13 J. Vigil, Justice Michael E. Vigil, Justice C. Shannon Bacon, and Justice David K.
14 Thomson concurring;

15 NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that any individual ordered to pay
16 fines or fees in a case in the district, metropolitan, magistrate, or municipal court
17 that are due between May 30, 2020, and June 30, 2020, shall be granted an
18 additional thirty (30) days from the original due date to pay said fines and fees; and

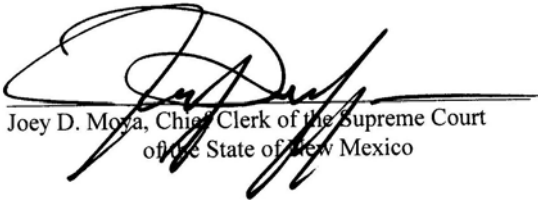
19 IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this order does not enlarge the additional

1 time already granted by this Court in Order No. 20-8500-005 to pay certain fines
2 and fees assessed in district, metropolitan, magistrate, and municipal court cases.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



WITNESS, the Honorable Judith K. Nakamura, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New Mexico, and the seal of said Court this 28th day of May, 2020.


Joey D. Moya, Chief Clerk of the Supreme Court
of the State of New Mexico

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1 **IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO**

2 **May 28, 2020**

3 **NO. 20-8500-020**

4 **IN THE MATTER OF**
5 **RECOMMENCING JURY TRIALS**
6 **DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

7
8 **ORDER**

9 WHEREAS, this Court suspended civil and criminal jury trials until May 29,
10 2020, in Order No. 20-8500-013 in light of the ongoing public health emergency;

11 WHEREAS, the evolving nature of the public health emergency will permit
12 the recommencement of jury trials in a manner that is consistent with the latest
13 precautionary measures recommended by public health officials for reopening
14 New Mexico in a safe and gradual manner that is based on the local circumstances
15 and available resources in each judicial district; and

16 WHEREAS, in light of the foregoing, and the Court wishing to begin the
17 recommencement of jury trials and being sufficiently advised, Chief Justice Judith
18 K. Nakamura, Justice Barbara J. Vigil, Justice Michael E. Vigil, Justice C.
19 Shannon Bacon, and Justice David K. Thomson concurring;

20 NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that civil and criminal jury trials
21 may recommence between June 15, 2020, and July 15, 2020, in each judicial
22 district pursuant to individualized plans submitted by the chief judge in each

1 judicial district for approval by this Court;

2 IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that each judicial district's plan for
3 recommencing jury trials shall incorporate all of the precautionary measures this
4 Court has previously ordered for the safe operation of courthouses in New Mexico,
5 provided that the fifteen (15)-person maximum gathering restriction previously
6 ordered by this Court may be exceeded if a minimum of six (6) feet in each
7 direction between every individual can be maintained while entering, inside, and
8 exiting the courthouse;

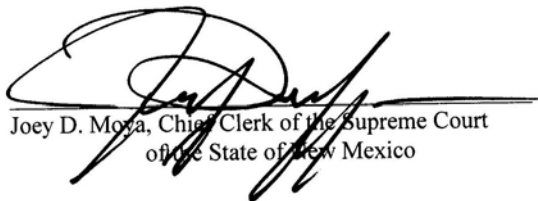
9 IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that each judicial district shall submit a plan to
10 this Court for recommencing civil and criminal jury trials at least fourteen (14)
11 days before the date that the judicial district plans to resume jury selection and jury
12 trial gatherings; and

13 IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this order shall remain in effect until
14 amended or withdrawn by future order of this Court.

15 IT IS SO ORDERED.



WITNESS, the Honorable Judith K. Nakamura, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New Mexico, and the seal of said Court this 28th day of May, 2020.


Joey D. Moza, Chief Clerk of the Supreme Court
of the State of New Mexico

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