

Commissioner Nikki Fried Proclaims ‘Mask Up Florida Week’

Oct 15, 2020

Tallahassee, Fla. — Today, **Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried**, an independently-elected member of the Florida Cabinet, issued a cabinet proclamation recognizing October 16 to October 23 as “Mask Up Florida Week” in the state of Florida to raise awareness on the importance and effectiveness of mask-wearing as a way to help curb the spread of COVID-19 and save lives.

“COVID-19 continues to be a global health crisis unlike any we’ve ever faced, devastating our communities, public health, and our economy. It’s crucial that we stand united in our response against this virus and take common-sense steps to protect each other, like wearing masks when in public,” stressed **Commissioner Nikki Fried**. “I’m proud to proclaim ‘Mask Up Florida Week’ to raise awareness on the effectiveness of mask-wearing and to encourage everyone to do their part to help beat COVID-19. With so many lives and livelihoods on the line, we have to take our responsibility seriously and mask up to protect our loved ones, businesses, essential workers — and make sure we’re doing all we can to keep Florida safe.”

[*Click here for high resolution footage of Commissioner Fried wearing a mask, practicing social distancing, and more.*](#)

Background: Commissioner Fried has been a strong proponent of mask-wearing during the COVID-19 pandemic and called on the governor in June to institute a [statewide mask order](#). As COVID-19 cases spiked to record-breaking rates statewide in July, Commissioner Fried also [made available](#) the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ (FDACS) Division of Consumer Services helpline to help hold bad actors accountable for ignoring COVID-19 directives, such as local government mandatory mask orders. In September, Commissioner Fried and FDACS [launched a nine-part video series](#) to provide guidance on COVID-19 safety precautions for farmworkers, including wearing masks, social distancing, and more.

The proclamation, which can be read in full below, builds on Commissioner Fried’s and FDACS’ efforts to raise awareness on effective practices to reduce the spread of COVID-19, protect consumers and businesses, and save the lives of Floridians.

Context: In August, Commissioner Fried launched [Be SMART Florida](#), a COVID-19 consumer awareness campaign asking Floridians to take small actions with proven results to slow the pandemic's spread, including wearing masks. The nonpartisan, bilingual, multi-channel awareness campaign uses an acronym to ask Floridians to **S**ocial distance, **M**ask up, **A**void crowds, **R**emember to wash or sanitize hands, and **T**hrow away disposable PPE items like masks, gloves, and wipes.

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that can result in severe illness or death by the SARS-CoV-2, which is a virus that can be spread from person to person; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has classified COVID-19 as a global pandemic, which has broadly spread throughout the State of Florida and remains a significant health risk to all residents and visitors, especially members of our most vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS, as of October 14, 2020, at least 758,538 people in the State of Florida have tested positive for COVID-19, resulting in a record-breaking number of 15,788 lives lost and 46,482 hospitalizations; and

WHEREAS, health authorities, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Surgeon General of the United States, and the Florida Department of Health, have recommended the use of face coverings as an effective means of preventing the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, face coverings are used to trap droplets that are released when the wearer talks, coughs or sneezes, are relatively inexpensive, and readily available; and

WHEREAS, for decades, mask-wearing by medical professionals has been the standard practice in hospital settings to help block the transmission of droplet-based diseases by preventing the spread of germs; and

WHEREAS, the evidence shows the proper use of face coverings over the nose and mouth, in conjunction with social distancing and frequent hand-washing is a safe and effective strategy for mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in Florida; and

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest to stand united in our response to curtail the spread of COVID-19 within the State of Florida by encouraging the use of face coverings, safeguarding the health and lives of Florida's 21.4 million residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Nicole Fried, Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services for the State of Florida, do hereby proclaim that October 16 through October 23, 2020, shall be known, designated, and set aside as

MASK UP FLORIDA WEEK

in the State of Florida to raise awareness on the importance of “Masking Up,” wearing face coverings, which help to ensure the public’s health, safety, and welfare as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 global health pandemic.

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