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March 13, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED IN WILKES COUNTY
Wilkes County and local municipalities declare emergency over COVID-19**

[Wilkesboro, NC, March 13, 2020] – Today the County of Wilkes along with the towns of Wilkesboro, North Wilkesboro, and Ronda declared a state of emergency. The action gives the county and municipalities additional legal and administrative tools to fight against the spread of coronavirus and COVID-19.

Specifically, the declaration gives the county and municipalities the ability to prohibit mass gatherings of one-hundred (100) or more people together at the same time and location. Such prohibitions are recommended by public health professionals as a way to limit opportunities for person-to-person transmission of the virus.

The declaration also directs all officers and employees of the participating agencies to cooperate in its enforcement.

The declaration exempts employees working at their usual place of business, church-related or faith-based services or events, normal daily classes and operations of schools and colleges, normal and usual operations at hospitals and medical care facilities, normal and usual activities at residential housing complexes and group homes, and the gathering of medical personnel and public officials in connection to the response to COVID-19.

However, it is highly recommended that organizers of exempted activities follow Governor Roy Cooper and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' recommendation to cancel, postpone, or modify their events.

The state of emergency will be in place through April 30, 2020.