

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 30, 2020

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**Williams County authorizes Vote by Mail for June 2020 election**

**Williston, N.D., (March 30, 2020)** – In a Special Meeting held this morning, the Williams County Commissioners voted unanimously to authorize the use of Vote by Mail for the June election as a measure to reduce the public’s risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Governor Doug Burgum signed an Executive Order on March 26, 2020, strongly encouraging counties to use Vote by Mail for the June 9, 2020 election. For counties that choose to do so, the requirement to host at least one physical polling location in the county is suspended. The Order also allows county election boards to open and process mail ballots no earlier than five business days before the election instead of only on the day before and the day of the election. Ballots cannot be counted until 7 pm on election day.

Vote by Mail means that voters can only vote via absentee ballot for the election. Per the Order, voters will be able to deposit their ballot into a secure mail ballot drop box location or they can return the ballot to the Auditor’s Office by mail. An option for assistive voting will also be provided.

The Secretary of State’s Office will be mailing absentee applications to all active and nonactive voters in the North Dakota Central Voter File along with postage-paid return envelopes. Counties will remain responsible for mailing the ballot to voters and processing them once they are returned.

More information about the location of the secure mail ballot drop box and the ExpressVote assistive voting device will be available on the Williams County website ([williamsnd.com](http://williamsnd.com)) closer to the election date.

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