



For Immediate Release

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Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson Responds to Governor Cox's Direction to State Departments That Masks Are Optional for Employees and Visitors in State Government Buildings

Salt Lake City, UT – “I have learned that Governor Cox has directed that with limited exceptions the mask requirement established by Salt Lake County will not apply to state buildings and the employees and visitors to those buildings.

While I appreciate the Governor's authority on many levels, he does not have the authority to exempt state buildings and employees from the Salt Lake County mask requirement and is defying a public health order of constraint.

With Omicron cases threatening our community not only is this a blatant disregard for the law by our state's chief elected officer, but a disregard for the health of our community and local authority. I would expect the Governor to set an example for us all by following the law during this challenging time.

Last year the legislature passed SB195, which created a process whereby health orders of “constraint” can be issued by a local health department. Those orders can be terminated by the local chief executive officer within 72 hours of issuance, or they can be overridden by the local legislative body at any time. The legislation does *not* allow for the Governor to disregard the local health order.”

Jenny Wilson
Salt Lake County Mayor

Under Utah Code Section 26A-1-108(1), "A local health department has jurisdiction in all unincorporated and incorporated areas of the county or counties in which it is established and shall enforce state health laws, Department of Health, Department of Environmental Quality, and local health department rules, regulations, and standards within those areas."

Utah Code Section 26A-1-114(1)(b), local health departments may "establish, maintain, and enforce isolation and quarantine, and exercise physical control over property and over individuals as the local health department finds necessary for the protection of the public health"

Utah Code Section 16A-1-114(k), "issue notices and orders necessary to carry out this part."

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