



Pennsylvania Department of the

**AUDITOR GENERAL**

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## News for Immediate Release

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### **Auditor General DePasquale to Audit State's Handling of COVID-19 Business Shutdown Waivers**

**HARRISBURG** – Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today announced he will audit how the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) has managed the waiver process for businesses that appealed Gov. Tom Wolf's COVID-19 shutdown order.

"Some business owners complained that the department's waiver process was too slow and not transparent enough," DePasquale said. "My audit is intended to help make sure that the waiver process is managed more smoothly should it be necessary to use it again in the future."

On March 19, Gov. Wolf ordered that businesses that were not categorized as "life-sustaining" must close their physical locations to help slow the spread of COVID-19, which has so far claimed the lives of nearly 2,200 Pennsylvanians and rising.

More than 40,000 businesses sought a waiver from the governor's closure order through a process managed by DCED. The waiver application period ended April 3.

"I'm pleased that Governor Wolf agrees that performing this audit is both appropriate and necessary," DePasquale said. "I'm also pleased that DCED Secretary Dennis Davin has pledged to fully cooperate with my audit team."

DePasquale said he is pleased by the bipartisan interest in the audit; Senate Republicans requested it earlier in the week. The audit process will begin immediately and results will be made public upon conclusion.

DePasquale's department continues to operate remotely while state office buildings remain closed.

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