Dear gTLD Registries and Registrars,

ICANN is sensitive to the growing scale of the coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) and concerns regarding its global effects. Registries and registrars have contacted ICANN and voiced concerns over the impact to their businesses as well as concern for their registrants. Registrants across the world may experience significant disruptions to their ability to renew domain names.

Therefore, similar to its 2017 approval of Hurricane Maria and other similar natural disasters as an extenuating circumstance under RAA Section 3.7.5.1, ICANN has approved to allow registrars to defer cancellation of domain names under Section 3.7.5 of the RAA. Based on this approval, **registrars will be permitted to temporarily forebear from canceling domain registrations that are unable to be renewed as a result of the impact of COVID-19 on domain name registrants**.

The RAA section 3.7.5.1. reads:

> *3.7.5.1 Extenuating circumstances are defined as: UDRP action, valid court order, failure of a Registrar's renewal process (which does not include failure of a registrant to respond), the domain name is used by a nameserver that provides DNS service to third-parties (additional time may be required to migrate the records managed by the nameserver), the registrant is subject to bankruptcy proceedings, payment dispute (where a registrant claims to have paid for a renewal, or a discrepancy in the amount paid), billing dispute (where a registrant disputes the amount on a bill), domain name subject to litigation in a court of competent jurisdiction, or other circumstance as approved specifically by ICANN.*

The COVID-19 pandemic once again highlights the potential need for a policy initiative to protect registrants when they are unable to renew their domains as a result of natural disasters or other extraordinary circumstances. In the interim, we encourage you to take these circumstances into consideration when reviewing renewal delinquencies.

ICANN is evaluating additional methods of supporting registrants, contracted parties and the community. If you have questions regarding this assistance or suggestions for future help, please email globalsupport@icann.org.

Sincerely,

Russ Weinstein
Senior Director, gTLD Accounts and Services
ICANN