

March 16, 2020

## A Message from Mote's President & CEO

For 65 years, Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium is thankful to have been supported as a strong member of, and leader in, our community. Over the decades, we have enjoyed good times and weathered challenging times together.

In this particular COVID-19 challenge we are facing together as a community, there have been calls at the national, state and local levels for varying degrees of social distancing, especially avoidance of events with 50 or more people in confined rooms, to help slow the spread of infections. Florida public school districts have also issued extensions of Spring break closures to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium feels strongly that we should support social distancing strategies, and has already postponed our annual Party on the Pass originally scheduled for Friday, March 20.

*As part of our continued commitment to the safety of our Mote Aquarium Guests, Staff and Volunteers, and out of an abundance of caution, we are temporarily closing Mote Aquarium to the public, effective March 16, 2020 until further notice. Regular update of Mote Aquarium operations status will be available at 941-388-4441 and on line at [www.mote.org/COVID19](http://www.mote.org/COVID19).*

Mote Aquarium Staff and Volunteers will continue to attend to the health, safety and nutritional needs of the animals in our care. Mote's animal hospitals and our marine mammal and sea turtle rescue, rehabilitation and release programs will continue to operate on their normal 24 hours a day/7 days a week schedule. Mote Education Programs will operate during this time on a modified schedule that is available at 941-388-4441 and on line at [www.mote.org/COVID19](http://www.mote.org/COVID19). Mote Marine Laboratory will continue our vital environmental monitoring and innovative research operations at all of our various campuses stretching from Sarasota Bay through the Florida Keys. Mote has implemented increased cleaning and protective hygiene elements at all of our facilities to protect staff and their families and ensure minimal disruption of their valuable services to our ocean and coast.

This decision for a temporary closure to the public is incredibly difficult for us given the great passion we have for helping the broader public become more ocean literate while affording our guests the ability to enjoy their time visiting our Aquarium. In addition, it pains us to not be able to serve as a global attraction that brings visitors from around the world to our local shops, restaurants and hotels.

However, just as we are committed to addressing the vulnerability of our coastal and marine life and resources, the well-being and safety of our guests, members, volunteers, trustees and staff is of greatest importance to Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium. As the situation continues to evolve, we are regularly monitoring information related to COVID-19, and will provide updates on our Aquarium operations in the coming days at 941-388-4441 and on line at [www.mote.org/COVID19](http://www.mote.org/COVID19).

We look forward to welcoming our valued guests back to Mote Aquarium soon!



Dr. Michael P. Crosby  
President & CEO

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Summerland Key, FL 33041  
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### MOTE AQUACULTURE RESEARCH PARK

674 W.R. Mote Way  
Sarasota, FL 34240  
(941) 338-4541

### MOTE CORAL REEF EXPLORATION EXHIBIT AT THE FLORIDA KEYS HISTORY & DISCOVERY CENTER

82100 Overseas Highway  
Islamorada, FL 33036  
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### MOTE LIVING REEF EXHIBIT AT THE NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY'S ECO-DISCOVERY CENTER

35 East Quay Road  
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