

News Release

MEDIA CONTACTS: [SUSAN O'BRIEN](#): MOBILE - 443-875-8540
[ALAN BRODY](#): MOBILE - 443-924-1473

Processing of Paper Income Tax Returns to Temporarily Stop on April 15 Due to COVID-19

Taxpayers seeking refunds urged to file immediately as agency continues processing electronic returns

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 6, 2020) - Comptroller Peter Franchot today urged Maryland taxpayers seeking refunds to file electronically as soon as possible and announced that the agency will temporarily stop processing paper tax returns on April 15, in an effort to keep essential employees safe amid the spread of COVID-19.

“We remain committed to getting refunds into taxpayers’ bank accounts during this economic crisis. However, we must balance that with our commitment to protecting the health of those dedicated essential employees who have continued reporting to work to process returns and distribute refunds in a timely manner,” Comptroller Franchot said.

Most taxpayers receiving refunds have already filed and the number of those anticipating refunds who have yet to do so and plan to file via paper returns is very low.

The deadline for individuals and businesses to file and pay state income taxes was previously extended until July 15.

To date, the number of both paper and electronic tax returns filed during the 2020 tax year has decreased from last year’s totals at the same time period — a drop of 27 percent in paper returns and 7.5 percent in electronic filings.

Since taking office in 2007, Comptroller Franchot has encouraged taxpayers to file electronically. Nearly 86 percent of the more than three million returns processed annually by the agency are filed electronically, while approximately 450,000 returns

are manually submitted, costing the state about \$5 each to process. It takes an average of 2.2 business days to process an electronically filed return compared to the average of 22 business days to process a paper return.

The decision to temporarily stop processing paper returns after April 15 will further reduce the staff who are required to work on site. The electronic filing process requires minimal human intervention; it is cost-effective and it is a more secure way to submit taxes at a time when tax fraud and identity theft schemes are on the rise across the nation.

For those taxpayers who must file paper returns and are anticipating a refund, Comptroller Franchot encourages them to do so by April 10, 2020, to ensure they will be processed before the April 15 temporary suspension. Once again, all taxpayers have until July 15 to file and pay their income taxes.

The agency will continue to monitor the situation closely and could alter the schedule if necessary.

“I commend our employees — both the small group of staff still reporting to the office, as well as those working from home — for their continued commitment to the taxpayers who pay their salaries and who are relying on their refunds to make it through these incredibly difficult economic circumstances,” Comptroller Franchot said.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Susan O'Brien - sobrien@marylandtaxes.gov 443-875-8540 (mobile)

Alan Brody - abrody@marylandtaxes.gov 443-924-1473 (mobile)

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