

News Release

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Processing of Paper Income Tax Returns to Resume Monday

Electronic returns now total two million processed

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (May 12, 2020) - Comptroller Peter Franchot today announced that a limited number of employees will return to work Monday, May 18, and resume processing paper personal income tax returns. The processing of paper income tax returns was halted April 15 due to concerns of essential employee safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Employees returning to Comptroller offices will follow all state and Centers for Disease Control guidelines. The Department of General Services will perform health screenings as employees enter the Revenue Administration Division building. Needed staff will be notified about their work schedules with a phased in approach for return. Masks, gloves and hand sanitizer will be available to all on-site staff. Spatial and social distancing will be followed and employees will work on rotated schedules. Those who have been teleworking to process electronic tax returns will continue to do so remotely.

During the temporary halt of processing mailed paper returns, agency employees continued to process electronic tax returns and open limited amounts of mail depositing tax payments totaling \$105 million.

As of Tuesday, a total of 2.17 million returns have been processed – more than two million electronic returns and 170,000 paper returns. In recent years, the Comptroller's Office typically processes 3.2 million tax returns with refunds of \$2.9 billion.

“Keeping dedicated employees safe is our top priority,” Comptroller Franchot said. “We remain committed to getting these paper returns processed and refunds back into taxpayers’ bank accounts in a timely manner. I commend all staff who have continued to report to work, either on site or remotely. We realize that many Marylanders are going through some difficult economic circumstance and are

relying on their refunds now more than ever.”

With the reduced workforce of 40 staffers returning to work, it will take approximately 30 days to open the 100,000 pieces of mail and to sort the returns for additional processing. Those due refunds should start to see them by the beginning of June. A significant percentage of filers receiving refunds were processed prior to the temporary halt of paper returns.

To further ease financial burdens, the deadline for individuals and businesses to file and pay state income taxes and most business taxes has been extended to July 15.

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.

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