

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 26-0095, **Version:** 1

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### **Item Description:**

Support Small Business relief in Hennepin County by waiving penalties for late license renewals

### **Resolution:**

BE IT RESOLVED, that Hennepin County Public Health Environmental Health licensed businesses shall have all late penalty fees waived for the year 2026

### **Background:**

As a result of Operation Metro Surge, many small businesses in Hennepin County are experiencing severe financial hardship. A sharp decline in customer traffic, coupled with the inability of affected staff to report to work, has led to significant revenue losses. Numerous business owners have been forced to temporarily close their doors, and many are now at risk of permanent closure without immediate intervention.

Submitting licensing fees and renewals has remained a significant challenge for many small businesses throughout Operation Metro Surge due to substantial revenue losses. Consequently, businesses are incurring considerable late penalty fees. Under Hennepin County Ordinance 1: County Licenses, Procedures - Criminal Penalty, a 25% penalty is assessed for payments submitted 1-7 days late, a 50% penalty for payments 8-30 days late, and payments more than 30 days late require businesses to cease activities permitted under the license. These requirements of Hennepin County Ordinance 1, last updated 46 years ago, impose financial penalties that no longer align with current business practices or the economic realities facing small businesses today.

As part of Operation Reconnect, the county assessed community needs with a focus on how to mitigate these impacts and support economic stability. Hennepin County Public Health is recommending waiving all penalties incurred for late renewal of licensed businesses for the year 2026.

This action supports the county's disparity elimination efforts in the income and employment domains by rapidly delivering relief to licensed businesses most impacted by Operation Metro Surge.

**Recommendation from County Administrator:** Recommend Approval