



April 28, 2020

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Board of Supervisors:

Thank you for your public service to the citizens of Sharkey County by serving as a member of the Sharkey County Board of Supervisors. We recognize the Board's desire to protect both citizens and county employees in Sharkey County from the Coronavirus/COVID-19. I am writing to urge you to make reasonable accommodations for access to the local land records for abstractors and for recording documents that affect real estate in Sharkey County. The COVID-19 pandemic is without precedent in recent history, and we are all doing our best to prevent the spread of the virus.

Of the 82 counties in Mississippi, only 2 have completely shut down (Sharkey and Tippah). Governor Reeves recognized real estate services (title specifically) in his Executive Order as essential businesses and services. We understand local officials need to protect their employees and the public; Many chancery clerk offices have made these reasonable accommodations. For example, they have, among other things, (a) limited access to the records to a small number of people or real estate professionals, (b) sanitized records rooms and offices often, (c) received recording documents through drop boxes, and (d) screened individuals as they entered the courthouse. Additionally, a growing number of clerks permit electronic access to records and give professionals the ability to electronically record documents.

The citizens of Sharkey County must have the ability refinance their homes to take advantage of record low interest rates and to have access to the equity in their property to survive. The savings from refinancing could be hundreds of dollars each month. This could go towards groceries, bills, and to support struggling local businesses. Without access to public records in Sharkey County to search title and without the ability to timely record a deed of trust, these transactions cannot close.

As a Board of Supervisor for Sharkey County, you have the power and authority to help the citizens and businesses in your community. Allowing abstractors limited, daily access to the land records and a chancery clerk employee to receive and process recordings is vital in helping Sharkey County citizens and businesses stay afloat through this difficult time.

Thank you for your assistance.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K. Farmer", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kenneth D. Farmer
Executive Director