

# More than 2,500 demonstrators gather in Huntington Beach after city vows legal action against state's order to close beaches

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More than 2,500 protestors gathered in Huntington Beach Friday, after the [city announced](#) it would pursue legal action against California Gov. Gavin Newsom's order to close Orange County beaches.

The Huntington Beach City Council voted 5-2 Thursday night to [direct the city attorney](#) to pursue "any and all legal actions necessary to challenge the State's beach closure directive."

During a press briefing Friday, Newsom said, "As it related to the lawsuit, all I can say is, doesn't surprise me."

In the meantime, the city agreed to close beaches Friday, in accordance to the governor's order.

"We're very concerned about if we happen to be the only Orange County beach open at that point," Huntington Beach Mayor Lyn Semeta said. "That would be very difficult on our marine safety officers."

Activities including sunbathing, walking, running, and watersports are also prohibited.



Demonstrators gather in Huntington Beach on May 1, 2020, to protest the state's stay-at-home order. (KTLA)

Friday's protest was organized by [We Have Rights](#) — prior to the state's order to close

O.C. beaches — in opposition to the state’s stay-at-home order. The group, which has demonstrations planned throughout California Friday, demanded that Gov. Newsom reopen businesses and churches.

“Our group is dedicated to the restoration and protection of the rights and freedoms provided under The Constitution for all Americans,” the group’s website states.

Although the group’s website said people should maintain social distancing throughout the demonstration, Sky5 footage showed protestors gathered at the intersection of Pacific Coast Highway and Main Street, in clusters, defying the state’s guidelines.

Between 2,500 to 3,000 people gathered, police said. While some protestors wore face masks, most did not.

Many in the crowd were waving American flags, and some were dotting “Make America Great Again” hats and holding signs endorsing President Donald Trump.



Law enforcement officials in Huntington Beach could be seen herding protestors out of the street during a protest against stay-at-home orders on May 1, 2020.

Demonstrators could also be seen holding a myriad of signs, with some that read, “Make America Open Again,” “I have the right to work,” and “Reopen California Now.”

Around 12:40 p.m., at least 12 law enforcement officials on horseback could be seen herding the large crowds out of the street and back towards the beachfront sidewalk.

Aerial footage also showed several people in the now-closed beach, swimming and surfing — defying the state’s order that went into effect Friday.

The protest is not the first to take place in Huntington Beach during the coronavirus pandemic. [Demonstrators gathered](#) on April 17 to protest the state’s stay-at-home order after the city announced it was closing all metered parking along the Pacific Coast Highway to limit beach visitations.