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Governor Lamont Suspends Statutes of Limitations in Connecticut in Executive Order 7G

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by Monte E. Frank, Timothy G. Ronan and Daniel P. Scholfield

In Executive Order 7G, Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont took the unprecedented step of suspending most of the state's statutes of limitations, effective March 19, 2020, thereby holding in abeyance the deadlines by which most civil lawsuits must be initiated. In practical terms, Executive Order 7G permits civil lawsuits that had a deadline of March 19, 2020, or thereafter, to be brought after those deadlines have passed.

How long will the suspension of these deadlines last? According to the Executive Order, the suspension is "for the duration" of the COVID-19 public health emergency. It remains unclear whether, or how much, additional time parties will have to commence the lawsuits that had their deadlines extended once Executive Order 7G expires.

The general suspension of statutes of limitations is unprecedented in Connecticut. However, that does not mean that there is no guidance regarding what the suspension may look like. After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, for example, all statutes of limitations were suspended in New York. In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, New York again suspended some statutes of limitations. After the State recovered from those tragic events, New York courts concluded that the suspension applied only to deadlines that would have expired during the suspension itself. Parties were then given thirty days to initiate their actions by a subsequent executive order of the governor. We do not know whether Connecticut will follow this model or not, but our Litigation Department will continue to monitor the situation.

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It is important to remember that Executive Order 7G *does not* prohibit new actions, and that filing your claims as early as possible is the best way to protect them from challenges.

Our litigation department is continuing to monitor the evolving situation and can advise you on the many changes occurring within the state and federal court systems.

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