

Signed: March 18, 2020



Rebecca B. Connelly

Rebecca B. Connelly
United States Bankruptcy Chief Judge

**IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA**

IN RE:)
)
Debtor Signatures on Electronic Filings) **Standing Order No. 20-3**
)
)
_____)

**ORDER TEMPORARILY SUSPENDING REQUIREMENT TO OBTAIN ORIGINAL
SIGNATURES FROM DEBTORS FOR ELECTRONIC FILINGS**

This Order is being issued in response to the recent outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia. On March 11, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national emergency as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) advises that individuals should engage in “social distancing” to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In addition, there are individuals who may be in isolation because they are sick or have been exposed to someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19. Accordingly, to reduce the need for personal contact, there is good cause to temporarily and conditionally suspend the requirement that an attorney obtain a debtor’s original, physical signature for an electronic filing.

Accordingly it is hereby **ORDERED** that, effective upon the date of this Order and until further notice, for all documents that require a debtor’s signature, the Court suspends the requirement that an attorney secure the debtor’s original, physical signature prior to electronically

filing such documents on the condition that, prior to filing, the attorney has either (a) obtained the debtor's digital signature via any commercially available digital signature software that provides signature authentication and maintains a copy of the digitally signed document(s) in the debtor's case file; or (b) obtains express written permission from the debtor to affix the debtor's signature to the document(s) and maintains a copy of the writing in the debtor's case file. The filing of the document(s) with a debtor's digital signature constitutes a certification that the attorney either has obtained the debtor's original, physical signature or has complied with the foregoing conditions. The electronic signature or the written permission shall have the same force and effect as if the attorney is in possession of the paper original of such document duly signed.

****End of Order****