



March 20, 2020

TO:

U.S. Governors

Dear Governor:

I am writing today on behalf of the lumber and building material dealer industry, which is essential to the COVID-19 response and the domestic American economy. NLBMDA with its state and regional association partners represent over 6,000 building material retail locations nationwide who operate single and multiple lumber yards and component plants serving homebuilders, subcontractors, general contractors, and consumers in the new construction, repair and remodeling of residential and light commercial structures.

As the country continues to stop the spread of COVID-19, we are seeing state and local governments promulgating quarantine orders and mandatory business closures. Specifically, lumber and building material dealers, and other businesses in their supply chain, play a crucial role in providing critical infrastructure and we urge you to recognize and/or continue to recognize employees of these businesses as “essential” workers.

This week, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has issued guidance to all states which recognizes businesses involved in the “manufacture and distribution of wood products...” NLBMDA strongly supports this federal guidance and urges you to implement this verbatim as you consider stay-home and closure orders. This action will protect the health and safety of your state, while also ensuring that essential businesses, like LBM dealers, remain operational.

LBM dealers are critical for supporting the nation’s residential and commercial housing sector, as well as containing the spread of COVID-19. California Governor Gavin Newsom has already agreed with our association and issued the following statement:

*"The California State Public Health Officer and Director of the California Department of Public Health is ordering all individuals living in the State of California to stay home or at their place of residence, except as **needed to maintain continuity of operation of the federal critical infrastructure sectors critical government services, schools, childcare, and construction, including housing construction.**"*¹

In addition, the Governor of Pennsylvania **recognized building material dealers as “life sustaining”**². There is widespread support for the LBM industry and its supply chain across the U.S. in its designation as essential. In light of this, we respectfully urge you to specifically include the lumber and building material dealer industry as “essential”, which will simultaneously protect the public and keep your local economies strong.

¹ <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/3.19.20-EO-N-33-20-COVID-19-HEALTH-ORDER-03.19.2020-signed.pdf>

² <https://www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/20200319-Life-Sustaining-Business.pdf>

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. Please contact Kevin McKenney at kevin@dealer.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Paine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jonathan M. Paine, CAE
President & CEO

cc:

Building Material Suppliers Association
Construction Suppliers Association
Florida Building Material Association
Kentucky Building Materials Association
Lumbermen's Association of Texas
Midwest Building Suppliers Association
Mid-America Lumbermens Association
Mountain States Lumber & Building Material Dealers Association
Northeastern Retail Lumber Association
Northwestern Lumber Association
Western Building Material Association
West Coast Lumber & Building Material Association