

March 19, 2020

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. President:

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. The National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association (NLBMDA) supports several public health measures that will help limit the spread of the virus. However, it is important that these orders do not inadvertently harm the lumber and building material (LBM) dealer industry and that it be designated as “essential”.

The LBM industry is essential in supporting the infrastructure needed to successfully combat this pandemic. Therefore, we recommend that your administration issue guidance on these orders to clarify “essential infrastructure” and “essential businesses and services” to include stores that sell lumber and other structural building materials, hardware, tools, plumbing and electrical supplies, doors and windows. In addition to the crucial support that these businesses give to the construction industry, these businesses sell cleaning products that are essential to proper sanitation and disinfecting.

Several counties have promulgated mandatory quarantines that include specific exceptions for “essential infrastructure” and “essential business” and we recommend exemptions for “essential infrastructure” that that allows individuals to leave their residence to provide any services or perform any work necessary to the operations and maintenance of “essential infrastructure,” including, but not limited to, public works construction, construction of housing (in particular affordable housing or housing for individuals experiencing homelessness), and lumber and building material sales.

Lastly, NLBMDA asks that you remain open to adding more items to specified “essential businesses and services” and “essential infrastructure” as conditions continue to change. We will be sharing this with the federal departments under your purview. Thank you for your attention to this concern and for protecting the LBM industry, which is vital to combating COVID-19.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Paine, CAE
President & CEO

cc:
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Homeland Security
Department of Housing and Urban Development
Department of Labor
Centers for Disease Control