



800-303-6770 • www.marylandsurveyor.org

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Governor, State of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan:

The Maryland Society of Surveyors (MSS), the state society of professional land surveyors and property line surveyors throughout the State of Maryland, appreciates the difficult decisions that need to be made to protect the public health, safety and welfare when dealing with the Coronavirus. Certain prudent measures are needed to prevent the spread of the virus, such as limiting or prohibiting large gatherings, as well as events, activities and businesses that attract congregations of people.

I am writing to respectfully urge that any order limiting business activities be mindful of the unique characteristics of the engineering, surveying, and geospatial profession and that these activities not be closed or limited.

Field work in surveying can continue with low risk. Field crews are commonly 2 or 3 persons, they do not have to work in close physical proximity to one another, or engage with the general public. In many circumstances, survey technicians can do their work quicker and more efficiently in the current environment due to reduced traffic on our streets.

Aerial data acquisition, such as aerial photography for mapping, also known as photogrammetry and airborne LiDAR collection, is time sensitive. Such projects must be flown in the coming days and weeks when there is no snow on the ground, the sun is high enough in the sky so as to not cast long shadows, and the leaves have not yet come out on trees. This activity cannot wait and resume later this year. An entire season/year would be lost. If this data is not acquired now, the work of thousands of employees who will be spending the rest of this year analyzing and processing that data will be terminated, causing a serious long-term threat to economic recovery.

Moreover, important projects such as resilience, flood plain mapping, development, infrastructure, and environmental protection, that are dependent on this data will be

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delayed, again, stifling longer term economic recovery. It is important to note that the work performed by surveyors and those in their employ are necessary for “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers”, as defined by Department of Homeland Security guidance, to perform their necessary and critically important responsibilities in service to our fellow citizens.

Any stop-work or work from home order can and should exempt such surveying-related activities. Such an exemption would not create a risk of persons being infected or spreading the virus. A shelter in place order similar to that imposed in Pennsylvania or Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts will prevent surveying firms from continuing to work, causing long term economic slowdown, with no positive impact on the Coronavirus pandemic. No amount of working from home or telecommuting can change the need for surveying work in the field.

Under a shelter in place scenario, an exception for these types of activities would alleviate the impact on surveying business, as well as other planning, design, construction, and other downstream economic activities, businesses, and industries that are dependent on surveying for other livelihoods. Even a short-term limit on surveying-related services will have a long-term negative impact on our economy.

Additionally, surveyors need state and local government support with regard to obtaining permits, inspections, and other regulatory and compliance activities and being allowed to perform field operations to keep our projects on track, keep companies funded, and keep employees engaged and paid. If these local government functions come to a close, it will paralyze surveying and other activities that are dependent on surveys. Finally, government at all levels should continue to fund and provide notices to proceed on surveying projects and not bring them to a halt.

For the reasons stated above, these activities can be carried out with low health and safety risk, are vital to keeping our economy moving forward, and should not be limited or curtailed.

We respectfully urge you to implement policies that are mindful of the unique characteristics of our profession and the long-term impact a limitation on surveying will have on our economy. Please permit us to continue working in a safe and responsible manner, to serve our fellow citizens.

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Should you have questions or desire additional information about the Maryland Society of Surveyors or the practice of land surveying, you can reach me at (240) 446-5337 and AWorley@rodgers.com or John Palatiello, Executive Director, Maryland Society of Surveyors at 800-303-6770 and at john@marylandsurveyor.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A E Worley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "A" and "E".

Aaron E. Worley, PLS
President