

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THOMAS J. DONOHUE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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March 18, 2020

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for all your effort to combat the coronavirus pandemic and support American families and businesses. We appreciate your leadership and whole of government approach.

As our nation continues to labor in halting the spread of the coronavirus, states and local governments are promulgating quarantine orders and mandatory business closures. These are important public health measures that will help limit the spread of the virus. However, it is important that these orders do not inadvertently harm businesses and services that support the essential 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.” Several counties have promulgated mandatory quarantines that include specific exceptions for “essential infrastructure” and “essential business” that our members find strike the right balance and we recommend these examples as a model for any state or local government issuing similar directives.

For example, the federal government should recommend exemptions for **“essential infrastructure”** 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), airport operations, water, sewer, gas, electrical, nuclear, oil refining and other critical energy services, roads and highways, public transportation, solid waste collection and removal, internet, and telecommunications systems (including the provision of essential global, national, and local infrastructure for computing services, business infrastructure,

communications, and web-based services), provided that they carry out those services or that work in compliance with social distancing requirements.

Further, an **“essential businesses and services”** classification should include:

- Healthcare operations and support services;
- Grocery stores, convenience stores, and other establishments engaged in the retail sale or provision of food, pet supply, and any other household consumer products (such as cleaning and personal care products). This includes stores that sell groceries and also sell other non-grocery products, and products necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences;
- Local, regional, and national delivery services, including but not limited to businesses that ship or deliver groceries, food, goods or services directly to residences and mailing and shipping services;
- Facilities supporting interstate delivery of goods, including truck and rest stops;
- Cleaning services necessary to provide and maintain disinfection;
- Food cultivation, including farming, livestock, and fishing;
- Manufacturing of goods necessary for the continue and immediate operation of other essential infrastructure and businesses;
- Businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals;
- Newspapers, television, radio, and other media services;
- Gas stations and auto-supply, auto-repair, and related facilities;
- Banks and their branches, stock exchanges, and related financial institutions;
- Hardware stores;
- Plumbers, electricians, exterminators, and other service providers who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences;
- Educational institutions—including public and private K-12 schools, colleges, and universities—for purposes of facilitating distance learning or performing essential functions, if operating under rules for social distancing;
- Laundromats, dry cleaners, and laundry service providers;
- Restaurants and other facilities that prepare and serve food, if operating under rules for social distancing;
- Schools and other entities that provide free food services to students or members of the public, if operating under rules for social distancing;
- Businesses that supply other essential businesses and people working from home with the support or supplies necessary to operate;
- Airlines, taxis, and other private transportation providers providing transportation services necessary for essential activities and other purposes;
- Home-based care for seniors, adults, or children;
- Residential facilities and shelters for seniors, adults, and children;

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- Professional services, such as legal or accounting services, when necessary to assist in compliance with legally mandated activities;
- Childcare facilities providing services that enable exempted employees to work as permitted, if operating under rules for social distancing.

We also ask that you remain open to adding more items to the specified “essential businesses and services” and “essential infrastructure” as conditions continue to change. We will be sharing this suggestion with state and local officials through our federation of Chambers of Commerce.

Thank you for your attention to this concern and your ongoing leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Donohue", written in a cursive style.

Thomas J. Donohue

CC: The Honorable Chad F. Wolf
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary
Department of Transportation