



Ecological Restoration Business Association
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March 26, 2020

The Honorable Governor Jared Polis
Office of the Governor
State Capitol Building
200 E. Colfax Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80203

Dear Governor Polis:

On behalf of the Ecological Restoration Business Association (ERBA), thank you for your leadership in confronting the COVID-19 epidemic facing Colorado and taking swift action to protect state residents. ERBA represents a growing sector of construction, design, and consulting based companies that deliver ecological restoration and resiliency projects critical to responsible public infrastructure development. Our industry is working to protect Colorado's wealth of natural resources, while expanding operations and supporting new job opportunities. Member companies engage with public and private entities to support critical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, trains, airports, dams, utilities, wastewater, water delivery, and energy production.

We write today in response to the statewide "stay-at-home" order that could inadvertently impact construction activities, particularly when those activities enable progress on government supported infrastructure and important public services. We respectfully request that your administration treat construction as essential services that should be continued in this time of crisis. We fear that a stop order on construction would seriously delay continuity in services and necessary upgrades to public infrastructure and services. Further, a sudden and indefinite hold on construction at some of these project sites is a liability and presents a threat to life and property for neighboring property owners.

While we fully appreciate the immediate need for statewide closures and enforced social distancing, construction sites, especially those in the ecological restoration context, are a unique workplace warranting unique treatment. Industry project sites are often on large tracts of isolated, rural land, and staffed with a small number of team members at a time who are easily able to maintain safe distances from fellow team members. The practice of "social distancing" is essentially built in to the reality of the job and job site. These projects also are tightly controlled, with the required safety protocols, separation from the general public, and all companies and personnel strictly following the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

In looking at the issue of “Essential Infrastructure,” ERBA recommends that the classification include, but not be limited to, all active construction job sites, public works construction, airport operations, water, sewer, gas, electrical, oil refining, roads and highways, public transportation, flood control, water delivery, restoration site construction, planting and dredging, wastewater systems, telecommunications systems, and emergency repair construction. When classifying “Essential Businesses,” ERBA recommends that the scope include businesses enabling responsible construction and improvements, such as environmental restoration firm providers, consultants, and contractors, to support the energy, water, wastewater, transportation, and public works sectors.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter and our request for treatment of construction as an essential service. If you have any questions regarding these recommendations or if ERBA can serve as an industry resource, please do not hesitate to reach out.

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