



Washington State Senate

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Republican Caucus

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March 27, 2020

Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO BOX 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee,

During this time of crisis, it is important that we put aside minor differences and come together to work for the common good of all Washingtonians.

For that reason we have made it a priority to work with you and your agencies to help prevent the spread of coronavirus, giving you a broad amount of leeway to make decisions you see as appropriate to help curb the transmission of the disease – without questioning those actions.

We have also brought our concerns, and those of the people we represent, directly to you and your agency officials.

We are, however, aware that government is acting inconsistently – and when that happens during an emergency, public confidence can be shaken at a time when it is needed most. We therefore write to once again voice our concern at the lack of a consistent response from you on the issue of residential construction and the essential nature of that industry in our state.

The clarification issued by your office on March 25, regarding your “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order of March 23 stated that most commercial and residential construction should be considered a non-essential activity, effectively shutting down residential construction and ordering workers to remain at home.

We could not disagree more. The people of Washington rely on the residential construction industry to not only provide housing, but to maintain housing structures and make sure that they do not present a danger to individuals. In your clarification, you appear to recognize these functions as being critical when it comes to government construction projects, such as low-income housing, but not in the private sector where it is every bit as essential. If construction workers on public projects can find a way to work and maintain social distancing, workers on private projects can do the same.

In addition, the residential construction market is of such high importance to our overall economy that not changing course on this directive could result in irreparable harm being done to our state economy and Washington families – harm that would extend well beyond the current crisis. We must also point out that during the just-completed 2020 legislative session, the need

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for more housing in our state – of all kinds -- was referenced countless times. That need is not suspended because of COVID-19.

Our constituents are sacrificing for the greater good. It is imperative that whenever possible, government should not ask some to sacrifice more than others when such a request is inconsistent. In regards to homebuilding, the consistent approach is to consider private and government construction the same. Both should be designated as an essential function. Workers in both can practice effective social distancing and maintaining public health.

For these reasons and more, we ask that you reverse your guidance from March 25 and declare that all residential homebuilding is an essential activity.

Sincerely,



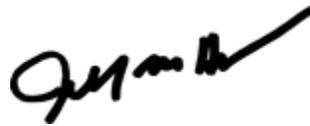
Senator Curtis King
14th Legislative District



Senator Randi Becker
2nd Legislative District



Senator Mike Padden
4th Legislative District



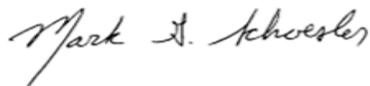
Senator Jeff Holy
6th Legislative District



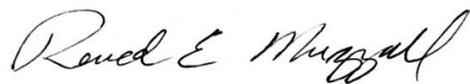
Senator Shelly Short
7th Legislative District



Senator Sharon Brown
8th Legislative District



Senator Mark Schoesler
9th Legislative District



Senator Ronald Muzzall
10th Legislative District



Senator Brad Hawkins
12th Legislative District



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