

April 3, 2020

Christopher C. Krebs  
Director  
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 205028  
By email: [christper.krebs@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:christper.krebs@hq.dhs.gov)

Re: Importance of Construction During COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Mr. Krebs,

On behalf of construction companies across the country, I am writing to express the importance of our industry to the nation's infrastructure in the midst of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

At the present time, there is significant divide amongst states as to whether construction should be classified as an essential service. A number of states have recognized our role in maintaining critical infrastructure, while several others have suspended all construction activity indefinitely.

Our office fears that the latter approach could be putting American lives at stake.

In addition to such obvious needs as the maintenance of roads and hospitals, the construction industry also plays a vital role in assuring that all people have access to safe and reasonable shelter.

This issue is twofold: First, members of our industry are key to producing new housing and lodging accommodations. Secondly, they are key to maintaining our current stock.

When people don't have working electricity; when they don't have running water or functional sewers, they present a tremendous danger to all of society with regards to the spread of disease. Construction is vital to preventing such scenarios. By limiting construction activity in some states, I fear that we are going to see more and more households lacking shelter that meets modern standards for safety and sanitation. This will only further the spread of illness, while also greatly reducing the quality of life for inhabitants.

Although restrictions on non-residential construction are less common at the present time, they present an even greater danger to society at large.

If we *don't* properly maintain the electrical and sewer systems of public buildings, if we *don't* ensure that the roads connecting hospitals are in good repair, if we *don't* ensure that hospitals

themselves are able to access construction services, I feel that we are making a grave mistake. Our public and private infrastructure is more critical than ever, and the construction industry plays a vital role in maintaining all of that.

Because of these concerns, we ask that if your agency enacts a national “stay at home” order, that you include construction in any definition of essential services. Construction companies across the country are here and ready to help; utilizing full protective measures while working overtime to ensure that we have the tools and people we need to keep Americans safe during this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Tara ‘Tipper’ Coker, Esq.  
Vice President, Business Development