



2108 W. Laburnum Ave., Suite 230, Richmond, VA 23227

March 19, 2020

The Honorable Brian Ball
Virginia Secretary of Commerce & Trade

Mr. Clark Mercer
Chief of Staff
Office of Governor Ralph Northam

Dear Secretary Ball and Mr. Mercer:

The Virginia Manufacturers Association represents the manufacturing sector and its supply-chain in the Commonwealth. Our [6,750 firms](#) and 238,645 workers earned \$14.3 billion in wages and paid \$37.6 million in taxes last year. The manufacturing sector is practicing social distancing, following quarantine protocol, limiting public gatherings and exceeding industry best practices. The COVID-19 economic impact is proliferating as evidenced by the recent temporary closures of Volvo Trucks and Phillip Morris USA, the craft brewery curtailments, and the supply-chain disruptions from California suppliers. Regardless, manufacturers will continue to contribute to the national objective of “flattening the curve” of COVID-19 infections and manufacture products essential to the public such as food, beverages, personal protective equipment, automobiles, paper products, chemicals, national defense products, personal hygiene products, communications equipment, robotics, medicine and medical devices.

As such, we are requesting Governor Northam’s support for designating all manufacturing facilities, supply chains and their employees as “essential infrastructure” and “essential businesses” to assure clear, consistent and uniformly aligned guidance to businesses as our nation responds to the COVID19 pandemic. This continued designation would also include support to rapidly respond to any infection at a manufacturing facility to help protect our employees and their families.

To further support the manufacturing sector, we request that the Governor consider the following executive actions for affected companies:

1. Delay Virginia payroll taxes for 90+ days.
2. Delay all Virginia excise tax payments for 90+ days.
3. Delay Virginia DEQ environmental compliance and permit reports for 90+ days. Lack of laboratory personnel, contractors and staff is critical for affected factories.
4. Extend Virginia DEQ environmental permit renewals for 90+ days.
5. Delay Virginia DEQ environmental permit fee payments for 90+ days.
6. Expedite U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) [Disaster Assistance Loan Application](#) approvals to two-weeks maximum.

Please thank Governor Northam for deferring income tax payments and sales tax payments. This will assist manufacturers, suppliers and contractors manage business volatility over the next 90 days.

The VMA and its members take their social responsibility seriously in limiting COVID-19 infections. Members are instituting best-practices to ensure public confidence in our product safety standards, personnel and facilities. A few of these best practices are listed below:

- VMA has developed a [COVID-19 Resource Center](#) to improve dissemination of qualified information.
- VMA will convert its Facebook page into an industry best-practices sharing site.
- VMA has transitioned all industry meetings and events to webinars until June.
- The Manufacturing Skills Institute is expanding [Industrial Hygiene Training Certificate](#) access.
- VMA is assisting the White House expand [critical supplies](#) for the COVID-19 response.

In closing, we will conduct biweekly meetings with the industry until the public gathering ban is lifted. If the Administration wishes to address the industry at any time, we are glad to make these webinars available to you. The first VMA webinar will be 12 pm, March 23.

Thank you for considering these requests and making the effort to balance the priorities of a public health crisis with the needs of essential businesses.

Sincerely,



Brett A. Vassey
President & CEO
Virginia Manufacturers Association

CC: Stephen Moret, VEDP; VMA Board of Directors