



News Release

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GOVERNOR DECLARES HOUSING INDUSTRY NON-ESSENTIAL

Lansing, MI – Yesterday Governor Whitmer, in response to a reporter question about essential industries, noted that industries like housing construction are not essential. Today, the Home Builders Association of Michigan is asking the Governor to rethink that assessment and to consult with federal homeland security officials and her colleagues from around the country in determining whether to shut down builders and contractors.

“Twenty three states including Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Minnesota declared the housing industry in their states essential,” noted Bob Filka, CEO of the Home Builders Association of Michigan. “In places like Sparta, Michigan, however, builders are being told to vacate incomplete homes even if those structures pose health and safety hazards. This needs to be corrected.” At the same time, Filka noted that places like Detroit are allowing far more activity than the Governor’s order appears to authorize and that such confusion needs to be addressed by the administration.

The City of Detroit’s website states: “*Creation of new housing units, including both market rate and affordable housing units, is essential. Construction projects can proceed, and new ones can begin if they contribute new residential housing stock to meet the County’s critical need for additional housing.*” The city also allows residential renovation projects of any kind that are currently underway to continue if necessary, for a safe, sanitary, and functional home.

“We appreciate the effort our Governor has taken to protect human health and have advised our members to err on the side of caution while following the executive order. We’ve also sent every member a link to the Construction Industry Safety Coalition Recommendations: COVID-19 Exposure Prevention, Preparedness and Response Plan put together by 17 construction agencies using the best advice from the Center for Disease Control and the U. S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration,” Filka said.

“While there is a need to clarify what is allowed under the current order,” Filka also stressed that there is a fundamental misunderstanding of how the homebuilding, renovation and repair industries function. “You can’t declare three quarters of our industry non-essential and expect to have a ‘safety and repair’ side of the industry available to help people maintain and repair their homes. The supply chain that feeds maintenance and repair activities also feeds the home construction and renovation markets. Without the latter functioning, the former can’t be sustained. Lumber yards, plumbing and electrical suppliers and others will be closing their doors if construction activity is not allowed. While we will obviously continue to direct our members to comply with the Governor’s order, we are asking the Whitmer Administration to modify her order as it relates to our industry. For the health, safety and welfare of our citizens, we believe such action is necessary.”

To see a national map of states that have declared housing essential, click here:

<https://www.nahb.org/Advocacy/Industry-Issues/Emergency-Preparedness-and-Response/Coronavirus-Preparedness/Stay-on-the-Jobsite>

The Home Builders Association of Michigan is a professional trade association comprised of 22 local homebuilder associations around the state and their builder, subcontractor and supplier members. HBA of Michigan works to positively promote the building industry and impact legislative, regulatory and legal issues affecting housing affordability.

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