



HBAGTA Executive Officer Update April 8, 2020

Good morning. I am writing to you with a brief update on developments at the state level. I want to start with a review of where we are and how we got here.

Governor Whitmer declared a state of emergency on March 10. “We are taking every step we can to mitigate the spread of the virus and keep Michiganders safe,” said Governor Whitmer. “I have declared a state of emergency to harness all of our resources across state government to slow the spread of the virus and protect families. It’s crucial that all Michiganders continue to take preventative measures to lower their risk, and to share this information with their friends, family, and co-workers.”

On March 23, the Governor issued Executive Order 2020-21, also known as the “Stay at Home, Stay Safe” order, limiting activities in the state – including homebuilding activities. This order is in effect until 11:59 PM on April 13.

Yesterday, the Senate and House of Representatives voted to extend the state of emergency through April 30. So, we can reasonably assume that the Governor will come out with an announcement in the next day or so, amending the Stay at Home order in some fashion.

Stay tuned for further developments.

Lee Schwartz, Executive Vice President for Government Relations at HBA of Michigan, has asked me to share this message with our members:

Hello all,

I’m not going to rehash all of the legislative and regulatory successes that HBAM has achieved for our members over the last 30 years under both Democratic and Republican administrations. **Dealing with these issues is why the state association exists.** I will point out to everyone that Bob, Dawn and I are professionals in this area and pretty good at what we do.

Despite the fact this is a unique situation, and that the challenges we all face change every day, rest assured we do have a plan even if it seems like we’re playing “Whack-A-Mole.” Much of our work is done behind the scenes and we often don’t broadcast it for obvious reasons. It’s the results that matter, not the process.

That doesn’t mean we achieve these results by ourselves. We need the support and participation of our members and their local HBAs. **And we need everyone rowing in the same direction.** On these legislative and regulatory issues, think of us as coxswain of the boat in charge of its

navigation and steering. When everyone is pulling smoothly together, we reach the finish line; when some shout out different directions for how the boat should move, we capsize.

During the town halls and in these emails, there hasn't been a strategy discussed we haven't considered. **Everyone needs to keep in mind this is a public health crisis.** The governor is viewing everything through that lens.

Governor Whitmer has listed five conditions for easing her restrictions: *(1) data on COVID-19 infections and the disease's rate of spread; (2) whether sufficient medical personnel, hospital beds, and ventilators exist to meet anticipated medical need; (3) the availability of personal protective equipment for the health-care workforce; (4) the state's capacity to test for COVID-19 cases and isolate infected people; and (5) economic conditions in the state.* **The death toll in Michigan keeps rising and every day sees new cases of the virus occurring.**

Respectfully, our Governor isn't influenced by what other states have done or by revised federal advisories. Nor is telling the Governor the stories of families who, for one reason or another, will suffer if their homes are not completed by a certain date exactly what we need to do to persuade her. She is aware of the economic hardships her EO has forced on not only Michigan's citizens, our industry and all industries in Michigan. The overriding purpose of her EO is to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

As many of you already know, the Michigan State Senate has created a bipartisan workgroup aimed at safely transitioning Michigan citizens back to the workplace by formulating a blueprint for "best practices" to help restart business. This committee has already been provided with copies of the Construction Safety Coalition's COVID-19 practices and procedures, the same one that we've linked to numerous times and which will be the subject of tomorrow's town hall meeting. HBAM will be assisting the committee in their task. They plan on issuing their report on April 17th.

Please heed the old adage "*Too many cooks spoil the broth.*" Unless you are directly contacted by a member of the committee or committee staff, do not call, write, email, telegraph or use other methods to communicate with the committee. **That's HBAM's job.**

We have supporters of home building and remodeling we are working with in both chambers and both sides of the aisle. By allowing HBAM to convince the committee residential construction and all that goes with it can be done safely, including assuring every building department is open and functioning, we can move forward towards getting the results we all want.

Thank all of you for your ongoing support and be safe out there.

Lee

As always, I am available to do my best to answer your questions and represent the interests of the HBAGTA. Let me know what I can do to help.

Bob



Robert E. O'Hara, Executive Officer
Home Builders Association of the Grand Traverse Area, Inc.