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March 25, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC EMAIL

Mayor Dave Kerner
PBC Board of County Commission
301 N. Olive Avenue
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Our Message: Keep Palm Beach County Safe & Working & Recognize Construction As Essential!

Dear Mayor Kerner:

On behalf of the 150 member companies of the AGC Florida East Coast Chapter (AGC FEC) and the thousands of individuals they employ locally, let us first thank you for your leadership in confronting the COVID-19 pandemic facing us here in Palm Beach County.

I am writing to express our support for keeping Palm Beach County a safe and healthy place to live and work. Our members, too, want to “flatten the curve” of the COVID-19 infection. Throughout our industry, safety is an essential part of our members’ everyday business practices. Be assured they are following safeguards, even more so vigilantly now, while also maintaining capacity to meet all workforce demands.

In fact, while each company has its own stringent safety protocols in place on a daily basis, the AGC FEC board of directors has also now adopted the following AGC Best Practices Documents **COVID-19 Recommended Practices for Construction Jobsites** ([English](#) & [Spanish](#)) and [Proactive Measures for Addressing COVID-19](#) for suggested commitment and utilization by the membership.

We know you, too, recognize the construction industry is vital to the success of our economy locally and critical to the resiliency of our county and its people as well. The construction industry’s role in building, maintaining, and enhancing our infrastructure is paramount to Palm Beach County’s ability to return to any sense of normalcy. AGC FEC member contractors, many working not only in the county, however throughout Florida and throughout the nation in some instances, know the important role they must play in supporting the municipalities, counties, state and our nation in these trying times we are all experiencing.

Our industry has an immediate challenge on its hands, however. To date, as counties and/or municipalities throughout the nation have issued exemptions and guidance, the construction industry has faced confusion around whether they are able to continue their important work consistent with/or pursuant to [CISA](#) guidance.

As we see precautionary steps increase across the nation, including here in Florida, the AGC requests you and other decision-makers consider construction as an “essential service” and, therefore, exempt construction from any shelter-in-place directives or similar orders, should it become necessary now, or in the future. This messaging has also been sent to governors across the nation as well as counties

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and local municipalities by AGC and its chapters across the nation. Furthermore, if such a measure is implemented, we recommend including the following language or something similar:

“For the purposes of this Order, individuals free from symptoms may leave their residence to provide any supplies or services or to perform any work necessary to the operations and maintenance of “Essential Infrastructure,” including, but not limited to all active construction sites, public works construction, construction of housing (in particular affordable housing or housing for individuals experiencing homelessness), hospitals and medical service building, education and education support facilities, airport operations, water, sewer, gas, electrical, roads and highways, public transportation, flood control, water conservation, solid waste collection and removal, internet and telecommunications systems, and emergency repair construction, provided that they carry out those duties in compliance with the social distancing requirements of this Order, to the extent possible.”

As state and local government agencies seek to implement their own continuation of operation plans, it may also be necessary for building inspectors and other construction-related professionals to be exempt from shelter-in-place directives. Doing so may require the use of electronic systems for permitting and plan review, creative approaches to inspections, use of private providers, and other innovation deemed necessary.

Lastly, the AGC FEC and its members stand ready to assist our local partners however we can. Additionally, AGC of America has done an outstanding job with its advocacy in D.C. and its [COVID-19 Industry Resources website](#), which has been a resource for our industry across the nation, which you or county staff may want to take the time to peruse.

The breadth of the coronavirus pandemic is something we haven’t experienced in our lifetime. All of us have been recruited to fight an unforeseen disruption of our lives, business and overall economic health and prosperity.

Together, let’s Keep Palm Beach County Working safely and ensure construction is deemed and clarified as essential.

Again, Mayor Kerner, we thank you for your leadership as well as that of the commission and county staff during this challenging time.

If AGC or its members can be of further help, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Michelle A. DePotter
Chief Executive Officer

C: Vice Mayor Robert Weinroth
Commissioner Mack Bernard
Commissioner Mary Lou Berger
Commissioner Melissa McKinlay
Commissioner Greg Weiss
Commissioner Hal Valeche
County Administrator Verdenia Baker
Palm Beach County Building Official Doug Wise
Palm Beach County League of Cities