

April 3, 2020

Honorable Governor Gretchen Whitmer
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Governor Whitmer,

Thank you again for your continued leadership as our state and country respond to the novel coronavirus pandemic. We appreciate your acknowledgment of the food & agriculture industry as an essential service sector in EO 2020-21.

As we work together to provide essential services to our citizens during this time of uncertainty, we understand the need for heightened protocols to protect the health and safety of all. We appreciate the efforts of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) and their ongoing communication to keep our industry informed and they understand the mounting challenges that we face. We believe MDARD is best positioned as a state agency to understand the needs of the food & agriculture industry and to convey those needs to emergency operations personnel.

As we hear from our farmers that are working every day to provide a safe and abundant food supply, there are some areas that your administration could help provide some direction to allow them to more effectively do their jobs.

First, we would ask that the MDARD be allowed to extend licensing coverage for those programs that they administer for the remainder of the calendar year for licenses requiring renewal. We have seen similar actions taken by states such as [Illinois](#) during the pandemic to allow for continued operations. As we draw closer to the spring planting season, this situation will only become more dire.

Secondly, we would ask for a reconsideration of retail garden centers to be included as essential infrastructure workers. The industry is willing to comply with increased reasonable restrictions to provide for social distancing such as curbside delivery. On April 2, Ohio Governor DeWine [clarified](#) retail garden centers are included in essential infrastructure designations and we would encourage you to do the same. For many of these growers, if they are not allowed to move forward with sales of plants that are already growing in greenhouses, it will be a complete loss and in many cases will mean an entire year of no income for them and their employees.

Again, the food and agriculture associated industries must continue operations while exhibiting an abundance of caution and adhering to CDC standards for employers and employees.

Thank you for your consideration and concern as we work together for the betterment of all during these uncertain times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Bednarski', written in a cursive style.

Carl Bednarski
President

Cc: Gary McDowell, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
Development

Grace Michienzi, Agricultural Policy Advisor, Office of Governor Gretchen
Whitmer