

The following language was inserted into PBA's request for Governor Wolf to grant a blanket waiver for members to complete currently open projects.

I am writing on behalf of the Pennsylvania Builders Association and our members across the Commonwealth. PBA members are engaged in all aspects of the residential construction industry. Our members include contractors, suppliers, remodelers, the skilled trades, and support professions across the spectrum. These individuals and businesses provide the essential shelter that everyone calls "home" regardless of whether that is a single-family home, an apartment or a condominium. Our members provide one of the fundamental human needs – shelter. Without shelter, Pennsylvania's residents will shortly have little life to preserve.

Our members have a vast array of projects under way in all areas of the state. Putting aside the massive financial impact of throwing those folks off their jobs, it is critical to the health and safety of those living in and near construction projects that our members finish what they have started.

Unfinished homes in stages of partial construction present dangers to children and trespassers who will inevitably visit those sites. Open foundations present fall hazards and potential pools for water that will attract insects and diseases. The tools and materials on job sites create opportunities not just for theft, but for vandalism and threats to safety. Jobs that are stopped midway cannot address the constantly changing challenges to stormwater runoff and its literal downstream effects. Open house and building frames invite mold that will remain a continuing hazard to the communities in which those buildings sit. Partially completed structures also offer space for vagrants to gather, illicit drug transactions to take place and other activities with knock-on health effects. While the Governor's Order will prevent law-abiding businesses from securing jobsites, it will not prevent lawbreakers from congregating in newly available structures where illegal activities can occur.

Many of our members don't know whether they can even go into existing homes to finish incomplete work necessary to enclose the occupants safely, install necessary equipment (plumbing, HVAC, emergency generators for medical devices, etc.) In addition, an untold number of Pennsylvanians are currently living in temporary conditions with the expectation that they would be able to inhabit their new home or return to their remodeled home. Many families cannot afford to remain in their temporary living quarters while they wait to move into their permanent homes. Please do not perpetuate a system that will increase the homeless population of the state.

We are not asking for a waiver to start any new projects or to break new ground. The shelter industry has no interest in perpetuating the current public health crisis. On the other hand, our members don't want to contribute to additional public health hazards simply because they were thrown off the job. We only ask that the State grant a waiver that would allow contractors to safely finish work on those projects that are currently underway. The goal is to make communities safer. The risk of injuries and even the spread of disease only increases as building projects remain unfinished and untended. Builders and associated trades are happy to finish their jobs using the latest guidance from OSHA and the CDC for safe work practices. The nature of most construction work often requires social distancing. Of course, any job that could be done "virtually" or electronically would be done in that manner to preserve the health and safety of everyone involved. Members of the shelter industry have no wish to put their customers and employees at risk; much less themselves or their own families.

We would welcome an opportunity to meet (virtually) with the Governor, any members of the Administration or public health officials to answer any questions. In the meantime, ***we request a blanket emergency waiver for all participants in the shelter industry*** so that they can complete and close the construction jobs that are currently underway and at risk.

Respectfully,

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