



March 22, 2020

Governor Tom Wolf  
Office of the Governor  
508 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: Continued maintenance of closed golf courses during COVID-19

Dear Governor Wolf:

On behalf of the seven chapters of the Pennsylvania Golf Course Superintendents Association, Pennsylvania Club Managers Association, Pennsylvania Golf Course Owners Association, Pennsylvania PGA Section – collectively representing nearly 700 golf courses in the Commonwealth – the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council, and the Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization, thank you for your leadership during this challenging, unprecedented time. COVID-19's effects have been far-reaching across all sectors of life.

In response to your Executive Order issued on March 19, we are writing to respectfully request clarification for golf course *maintenance* as an essential business activity. Although golf courses in Pennsylvania have temporarily closed retail business operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, basic maintenance on the grounds cannot stop. According to Section 9 of the “Life-Sustaining Business Frequently Asked Questions” document issued by your office:

“Businesses suspending physical operations must limit on-site personnel to maintain critical functions, and in all cases follow social distancing and COVID-19 mitigation guidance provided by the PA Department of Health and CDC.”

Maintaining our state's golf facilities during this critical period of business shut down is exactly that, a critical function.

Spring is a critical time for turfgrass and it cannot be neglected for extended periods of time. If turfgrass is lost, many courses may face permanent closure. Any halt or delay in maintenance now will only accelerate the potential for significant turf loss on golf courses statewide in the weeks and months ahead. Additionally, without timely maintenance, these large green spaces can quickly become overrun with weeds and invasive species that can compound illness with large amounts of pollen and weed seed being released into the environment.

Rest assured; the golf industry is taking aggressive steps to stop the transmission of COVID-19. CDC guided policies and best practices – such as social distancing, staggering of work schedules to reduce employee contact points, and increased sanitizing of all workspaces and bathrooms, to name just a few – have been implemented within our team's day-to-day operations. Golf

course maintenance, by its nature, is an outdoor activity performed by individuals working on their own, naturally keeping extensive distance from other workers and not interfacing with the general public.

We are all in this together. The golf course and turfgrass industries stands with your office and Pennsylvania's public officials to contain COVID-19. We hope you will endorse our interpretation to continue to perform these essential functions within our communities. We look forward to your reply and invite your office to contact us at any time to clarify our concerns listed above.

Sincerely,

Rick Paget, President  
Pennsylvania Golf Course Superintendents Association

Richard Newman, CCM  
Club Managers Association of America, Central Pennsylvania Chapter

Robert Kleckner, PGA Member  
Pennsylvania Golf Course Owners Association, President

Pete Ramsey, Interim President  
Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council

Dan Douglas, President  
Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization