March 18, 2020

The New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association represents the landscape, lawn care, garden center, nursery and allied industries. We work with over 550 member companies, representing over 10,000 members of this vast industry in New Jersey.

We understand, due to the COVID-19 crisis, it may be necessary to shut down all businesses in the state, save for a few, considered “essential” to flatten the curve.

We ask that you recognize the landscape and nursery industries as those that are essential.

For the foregoing reasons, landscape services should be deemed “essential.”

- As spring continues to develop, grass will grow and require services to maintain them. Not maintaining properties will harbor pest, garbage, diseases that can’t be controlled, etc.:
- We have growers who have received orders from us on perishable items for spring planting the must be planted or these growers will be faced with an extreme hardship and an enormous loss of money that have already expended to make these orders happen. Growers have had plants in production since January.
- Many of our workers are hourly employees who have already been laid off since December 20th and are nearing term limits for their unemployment and require their jobs back just so that they can pay bills. Not allowing us to work will be an extreme hardship on our employees.
- Allowing Landscapers to work and clean-up winter debris will allow for fresh new growth to happen, thus eliminating dirt and debris from the winter that may harbor any unwanted remnants of mold and bacteria.
- Insecticides can be applied properly to help prevent and spread disease through insects, I’m sure this will be the next form of transmission. Landscapers are protectors of public health performing essential treatments to lawns and green spaces to reduce the transmission of dangerous and deadly diseases through pests like mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas.
- Landscapers protect property and maintain greenspaces that could otherwise jeopardize public safety. Unkept fields and green spaces increase the chance of injuries. Crime rates are increased in areas where green spaces are not maintained. Tree removal is also a critical function of our industry to avoid damaging homes and their families.
- Landscapers play a critical role in boosting morale and mental health during a difficult time for our state and nation. Without landscape services fields, parks, businesses, and homes will become overgrown and unkept, which can have dramatic psychological effects on the mental and wellbeing of our communities.
- Lastly, our industry is taking aggressive steps within our organizations to stop the transmission of COVID-19. Because our industry functions outside this greatly reduces the chances to come into contact with other individuals. Within the industry, strong policies are being put in place to maintain social distancing with both clients and within our teams that are working in the field.
We are all in this together, and the landscape and nursery industries stand with our public officials to stop the rapid transmission of COVID-19 while also continuing to perform those essential functions that are necessary within our communities throughout the State of New Jersey.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Gail Woolcott
Executive Director