

The Alliance of Massachusetts Golf Organizations

March 24, 2020

Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street
Office of the Governor, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

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

Dear Governor Baker & Lieutenant Governor Polito:

On behalf of the Alliance of Massachusetts Golf Organizations – collectively representing nearly 375 golf courses in the Commonwealth – 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 23, we are writing to respectfully request clarification for golf course *maintenance* as an essential and critical business activity. Although golf courses in Massachusetts have temporarily closed retail business operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, basic maintenance on the grounds cannot stop.

Maintaining our state's golf facilities during this critical period of potential business shut down is exactly that, an essential operation for the continued health of our community properties and the current and future health of the golf industry in Massachusetts.

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 stand with your office and Massachusetts's public officials to contain COVID-19. We hope you will endorse our critical need 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.

Respectfully,

The Alliance of Massachusetts Golf Organizations

Inclusive of:

Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England: Peter Rappoccio, CGCS, President
Golf Course Superintendents Association of Cape Cod: David Stott, President
New England Chapter, Club Management Association of America (CMAA): Jeff S. Isbell, CCM, President
New England Golf Course Owners Association: Elaine Gebhardt, Executive Director
New England Section of the PGA of America: Michael Higgins, Executive Director
Francis Ouimet Scholarship Fund: Colin McGuire, Executive Director
PGA TOUR, Julie Tyson, Executive Director
New England Golf Association: Greg Howell, Manager of NEGA Operations
Mass Golf (Massachusetts Golf Association): Jesse Menachem, Executive Director/CEO

The Alliance of Massachusetts Golf Organizations (AMGO) is dedicated to promoting and serving the interests of the game of golf and the golfers in Massachusetts.

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