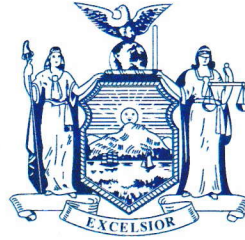


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CHRISTOPHER L. JACOBS
SENATOR, 60TH DISTRICT

April 28, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor
State of New York
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I am writing to request that your administration include the horticulture industry to the list of essential businesses eligible to operate under Executive Order 202.6. By way of definition, this industry should include greenhouses, grass turf growers and landscaping operations.

The very nature of the work this industry and its companies perform lends to the ability of its employees to practice social distancing and other coronavirus mitigation practices. Their common interaction with various pesticides and chemicals dictates their use of appropriate personal protective equipment, and there is no reason for them to come into any close or unsafe contact with the customers they serve.

It is also important to recognize that the existing order as written places many of these companies at a severe competitive disadvantage with big box retailers and national chains still operating that sell identical products. This disadvantage becomes more severe within the horticulture industry as nurseries who sell vegetable plants and fruit trees can remain open while their competitors are not.

Often overlooked is the significant multiplier effect horticulture possesses. With nurseries selling fewer plants, shrubs and trees, growers face the prospect of losing hundreds of thousands of dollars in perishable products. While landscapers are not purchasing mulch in large quantities, lumber companies are hurt by reduced sales and backlogs of trees that will not be repurposed. These companies will benefit significantly too when horticulture is deemed essential.



Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
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The horticulture industry's season is a short one and is already underway. Unless this industry and its operations are deemed essential, the entire revenue season will be lost and the long-term viability of many of these companies will be threatened. At a time when we are examining how to get our state open again for business, adding the horticulture industry to the essential businesses list would be a great first step. I hope that your administration will make this matter a top priority and take the necessary and appropriate action immediately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Jacobs". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "J".

Senator Chris Jacobs
60th District