



LEGISLATURE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

April 14, 2020

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

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We write asking for reconsideration of recently issued guidance from Empire State Development (ESD) regarding the closure of privately-owned golf courses as part of the New York on PAUSE directive. Our offices have learned of many questions, concerns, and confusion among course operators and golfers. Many privately-owned golf courses are seasonal businesses facing a tremendous negative fiscal impact from the Coronavirus public health crisis and have shared their concerns with us.

It is our understanding that privately-owned golf courses have been instructed by ESD to cease operations as of April 9. There is virtually no interaction between private golf club employees and golfers, which is in keeping with the New York on PAUSE requirements for social distancing. When compared to crowded New York City Parks, local privately-owned golf courses have acres of land per person, allowing for considerable physical space between golfers.

Prior to the state-mandated shutdown, privately-owned golf courses abided by professional guidance offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as the New York State Golf Association (NYSGA). That guidance included the implementation of all CDC and state-mandated guidelines promoting safe, social distancing including no access to pro shops, locker rooms, indoor facilities and restaurants/bars (unless for take-out purposes only), and no transactions of money, credit cards, or other payment for purpose of play, equipment and/or merchandise. In addition, these guidelines featured specific provisions regarding social distancing on the golf course that included staying at least 6 feet away from others, not shaking hands before or after a game, leaving the flagstick in the hole, removing rakes and ball washers from course, not sharing clubs or any other equipment, and limiting golf cart use to one person.

During this difficult time, the need for physical exercise and, frankly, a positive diversion provided by a beloved sport such as golf – done in a careful manner with proper social distancing – is important. Our state needs to allow opportunities for individuals to engage in a safe, athletic outlet such as golf for their physical, mental, and emotional health and personal wellbeing. Allowing privately-owned golf courses to remain open will also ensure that staff is available in the event individuals attempt to illicitly use a course without proper supervision.

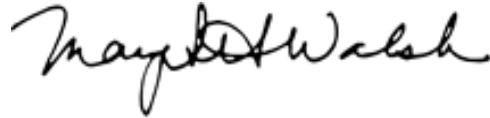
The CDC and NYSGA have established common-sense guidelines for golf courses to remain open that should inform ESD's decision-making going forward. We respectfully request that you revisit the decision to include privately-owned golf courses as part of the New York on PAUSE directive. Golf courses are businesses that can safely re-open and begin a much-needed start of the necessary effort to get New York's economy moving forward again.

Thank you for your continued leadership and service to New York State during this difficult time. We are one New York and we will get through this crisis, together.

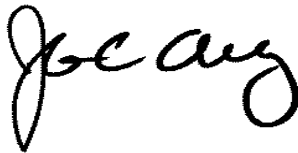
Sincerely,



Daphne Jordan
State Senator, 43rd District



Mary Beth Walsh
Member of Assembly, 112th District



Jake Ashby
Member of Assembly, 107th District