March 23, 2020

To: PMA Ohio Members

On Sunday, March 22, 2020, the State of Ohio issued a mandate for all Ohioans to stay in their homes to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 beginning at 11:59 p.m. EDT on Monday, March 23, 2020 until 11:59 p.m. on April 6, 2020. The order limits gatherings to those living within a single household/unit and at no more than 10 people. This action follows similar steps taken in California, Illinois, Louisiana, New Jersey and New York. We expect other states and counties across the country to follow suit in the coming days.

After working with the White House last week to develop a set of national guidelines, PMA’s One Voice advocacy team succeeded in lobbying to have Ohio and several other states adopt a federal definition of Critical Manufacturing for those businesses permitted to continue operations.

Page 5 of the Ohio order specifically identifies the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) CISA list on which One Voice lobbied as the accepted definition for an essential critical infrastructure employee. More importantly, page 6, subsection q, includes “Supplies for Essential Business Operation. Businesses that sell, manufacture, or supply other Essential Businesses and Operations...”

That federal DHS definition on which One Voice lobbied to help establish includes “medical supply chains, transportation, energy, communications, food and agriculture, chemical manufacturing, nuclear facilities, the operation of dams, water and wastewater treatment, emergency services, and the defense industrial base,” also including defense subcontractors (see Critical Manufacturing and Defense Industrial Base categories on pages 10 and 11).

For your employees, the State’s guidance says, “If you have been designated essential by your employer, you should continue to go to work and practice social distancing.” Separately, it states, “Essential Businesses and Operations shall comply with Social Distancing Requirements as defined in this Order, including by maintaining six-foot social distancing for both employees and members of the public at all times.”

It is not clear if there is a waiver/exemption process in Ohio for companies not defined on the list, as has been created in Pennsylvania.

The State has, however, been approved by the Small Business Administration (SBA) for companies seeking disaster loans for up to $2 million. Ohio has begun to provide an online resource portal for businesses and we expect additional resources to come soon.
In Washington, D.C., our lobbyists indicate that the U.S. Senate is hoping to vote on a final package in the coming days, though a U.S. Senator has now tested positive for COVID-19 with several others under self-quarantine.

The measure on which One Voice is lobbying could include $350 billion for small businesses, those defined as having fewer than 500 employees. This proposal includes allowing eligible companies to receive zero interest "business interruption loans" to pay employees, rent or mortgages that are backed by the SBA, with forgiveness contingent on keeping workers on the payroll. The draft bill also includes an expansion of Net Operating Loss and several other provisions requested by the association.

Following conversations with PMA members and a survey of companies last week, our D.C. team submitted to the White House and Congress a list of 10 recommendations to support manufacturers during the COVID-19 economic recovery process, several of which are included in the pending measure.

The recommendations include solutions to help with cash flow, prompt payment terms to suppliers for companies receiving federal funds, ensuring banks do not revoke existing lines of credit, and making sure manufacturers have the resources to continue operations and quickly ramp up production after the crisis wanes.

The situation is very fluid and, while PMA is a national organization, we are mobilizing all of our resources to assist our members throughout the country. Working with our team in Washington, D.C., we created www.onevoiceinfo.org as a one-stop resource for members to find links to the latest OSHA, CDC and local government resources, including workplace safety posters to print.

Thank you for your support of PMA. Please reach out to us at any time as we all work through this together.