



March 22, 2020

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

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Printing Industries Alliance is the trade association representing printing and print related businesses in New York State. As an industry, we are appreciative and supportive of your leadership in managing this unprecedented situation.

**We are writing to request that companies within our industry be granted an exemption from the workforce reduction requirements contained in your Executive Order. We are hoping that New York State will rethink its decision and designate printing as an essential business. Pennsylvania and New Jersey have recognized this fact and granted blanket exemptions. Our printers are an important part of the supply chain for all NYS designated “essential businesses”.**

Printing is an “Essential Industry” in New York! Print is the invisible backbone of every industry. Without Print, key essentials to life such as clear and concise communication regarding food packaging & pharmaceuticals, labels and tags for medical supplies, signage, critical communications, etc. will come to a screeching halt. Many lifesaving and life supporting goods will be prevented from reaching end users who need these items to not only combat COVID-19 on the front lines but for the majority of the population to remain healthy and/or recover as well.

Over the past several days I have spoken with dozens of printing business owners and managers about what actions they are taking and what they are seeing with regard to the coronavirus pandemic. Without exception, these companies have taken steps to protect their workforce utilizing telecommuting, spreading employees across shifts, increasing distance between equipment, ongoing sanitizing, reducing workforce levels, and more. What is amazing is, to a company, they are all engaged in some type of production activity designed to support the sectors of business activity designated by Governor Cuomo as “Essential Businesses or Entities”. These include:

- \* Printing of packaging components for pharmaceuticals, food, beverages, etc.
- \* Printing of information for banks designed to assist customers who need to start online banking transactions
- \* Printing of communications including newspapers, newsletters, bulletins etc. which provide information and guidance on coronavirus.
- \* Printing of packaging components for pharmaceuticals, food, beverages, etc.
- \* Printing of information for banks designed to assist customers who need to start online banking transactions
- \* Printing of communications including newspapers, newsletters, bulletings, etc. which provide information and guidance on coronavirus.

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- Printing of packaging components for pharmaceuticals, food, beverages, etc.
- Printing of information for banks designed to assist customers who need to start online banking transactions
- Printing of communications including newspapers, newsletters, bulletins etc. which provide information and guidance on coronavirus.
- Printing of instruction sheets, labels, etc. for the use of disinfectants, hand sanitizers, etc.
- Printing of door hangers with instructions on avoiding coronavirus infecti\*      Printing of communications including newspapers, newsletters, bulletins etc. which provide information and guidance on coronavirus.
- Printing of instruction sheets, labels, etc. for the use of disinfectants, hand sanitizers, etc.
- Printing of door hangers with instructions on avoiding coronavirus infection
- Printing of health and safety information for mailing by various NYS agencies
- Printing of materials for the United States Department of Defense
- Printing of materials for the United States Government Printing Office
- Printing of COVID -19 information pertaining to farm employment
- Printing of signage to alert the public to important announcements and changes
- Printing to support the distribution of banking, insurance, and financial information
- Printing of election ballots and materials
- Printing of ballots and support documents for New York State elections and other civic activities
- Printing of support documents for hospitals, medical, and dental practices
- Printing of mailings to Medicare and Medicaid recipients

**Even more amazing is, New York State has not recognized printing as an “essential industry”!**

We spent the last few days helping companies prepare individual applications to be recognized as essential businesses. The applications have been turned around quickly but it seems like only about 50% have been approved. Hence, we are engaging in an effort, starting now, to help NYS recognize that these are critical activities and they need to provide a blanket exemption for any printing companies who are producing these materials.

Last week, Pennsylvania enacted a total ban on printing companies continuing to operate. Thanks to the quick response of our sister affiliate, the Graphic Arts Association, this ban was quickly reversed and **all Pennsylvania printers are considered essential**. Yesterday, New Jersey banned non-essential businesses from operating **with printing being designated as essential**. New York needs to do the same!

I have had untold accounts of printing companies getting calls from customer businesses who have been designated as “essential”, begging them to stay open to produce materials in support of their efforts. Now is not the time for these “essential businesses” to have to shop for a new printing company. These materials need to be turned out quickly so the “essential business” customer can act quickly. **Speed = Saved Lives!**

Printing is an important part of the supply chain for “essential businesses”. New York State has designated suppliers and manufacturers of commercial paper and packaging materials as essential, one would think so the designated “essential businesses” would have access to supporting materials, packaging, etc. necessary to support their essential activities. How are these activities going to be supported without printed documents, packaging, etc.?

At this point in time in the coronavirus crisis, **non-essential businesses are not ordering printing!** Logical thought would then reason that any printing company remaining in operation would be producing

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work for “essential businesses” with a workforce that has been pared down to meet production requirements. When the demand for “essential business” decreases, these companies will have to adjust their workforce accordingly.

We cannot stress enough the importance of maintaining print and mail as essential to keeping citizens safe and fighting this pandemic. This is especially true for the elderly who are the most vulnerable to coronavirus, are being warned about traveling outside their home, who generally do not have regular internet access, and need timely and accurate information to stay safe.

In furtherance of this effort, we are calling on New York State to recognize the importance of Print in this effort and recognize all aspects of printing as an “essential business”! Print is the backbone of all “essential industries”. Thank you again for your leadership and we are ready to do all we can to support your important initiatives! Please contact me at [tfreeman@PIAlliance.org](mailto:tfreeman@PIAlliance.org) or on my cell at (716) 983-3826 with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Freeman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Timothy Freeman, President  
Printing Industries Alliance