



A message from the Washington Agricultural Community

March 18, 2020

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Governor of Washington State
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, Washington 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

We understand COVID-19 is creating a stressful time and policy decisions are extremely difficult and fluid. You can be assured Washington's farmers, dairies, livestock auction markets, ranchers and food processors are doing and will continue to do everything in their power to provide nutritious, affordable food for the state, nation and world in these challenging times.

We are collectively taking all possible precautions to keep our communities, transportation systems, farm supply, food processing, packing, workers, and farm families safe. However, we do want to voice our concern that restrictions on food production/distribution could devastate our ability to be part of the solution regarding food security for all citizens if critical food production and delivery activities were curtailed.

We are also mindful that many vulnerable people across the state will depend on take-out and delivery from our restaurants. Especially at a time where stores are crowded, the connection to restaurants provides a social and nutritional connection needed for the health of our older and health-challenged residents. Restaurants remain a vital part of the Farm-to-Table food chain.

Farming can't be put on hold given the short window of time for planting and performing critical agricultural activities, any delays would disrupt the current, and future, food supply.

The undersigned agricultural organizations represent farmers and ranchers from every corner of Washington State. We are writing to request that agricultural and food processing/distribution activities be exempted, *to the greatest extent possible*, from future Proclamations restricting Washington citizens in response to COVID-19.

This request includes all activities needed in the production of agricultural commodities like seed, fertilizer, water, fuel, pesticides, packing materials, packaging, and repair parts, as well as inspection and transportation as needed, including movement to and from Washington's food processors.

We also request that our port facilities be considered an essential service and allowed to continue operations. Ports play an essential and significant role in the overall food supply chain.

We know you have a very difficult job and combating COVID-19 is very important to our entire state, including Washington's farmers, dairies, livestock auction markets, ranchers, food processors and the communities that depend on them.

Accordingly, please exempt agricultural activities from future Proclamations in response to COVID-19. If that is possible, we can collectively keep our resilient agricultural community providing wholesome food to those in need during these uncertain times.

Sincerely,

WASHINGTON'S AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY

Food Northwest

HighLine Grain Growers Inc.

Hop Growers of Washington

Northwest Agricultural Cooperative Council

Northwest Farm Credit Services

Northwest Grain Growers Inc.

Washington Asparagus Commission

Washington Association of Wheat Growers

Washington Blueberry Commission

Washington Brewers Guild

Washington Cattlemen's Association

Washington Cattle Feeders Association

Washington Farm Bureau

Washington Friends of Farms & Forests

Washington Grain Commission

Washington Livestock Marketing Association

Washington Potato & Onion Association

Washington Public Ports Association

Washington Red Raspberry Commission

Washington Seed Potato Commission

Washington State Dairy Federation

Washington State Potato Commission

Washington State Tree Fruit Association

Washington State Water Resources Association

Washington Winegrowers Association

Washington Wine Institute

CC:

- Derek Sandison, Director, Washington State Department of Agriculture
- David Postman, Chief of Staff
- Drew Shirk, Executive Director, Legislative Affairs
- JT Austin, Senior Policy Advisor, Natural Resources & Environment