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March 20, 2020

Dear Mayor Cantrell,

The scope of the coronavirus pandemic is something we haven’t experienced in our lifetime. Each of us has been recruited to fight an unseen enemy that is disrupting our lives, businesses, and overall economic health. We greatly appreciate your leadership in guiding the Greater New Orleans region through this crisis and ensuring the safety and health of every Louisiana citizen.

The Architecture, Engineering and Construction community (A/E/C) is doing its part to comply with all workplace and employee safety recommendations. Throughout our industry, safety is an essential part of our everyday business practices. Be assured we are following safeguards while maintaining our capacity to meet all workforce demands.

**To this point we have one simple message: Keep New Orleans working.**

The A/E/C industry designs, builds and maintains New Orleans’ critical infrastructure. Not only facilities currently in service, but those that are in development such as key educational facilities needing to open to serve students this fall, and medical facilities to assist the public. Our retail and food supply chains rely on the capacity of our highways, airports and ports. They must remain open so rail operators, cargo shippers and truckers can deliver much-needed medical supplies, personnel and goods where they are most needed. The continuity of our power grid, water systems and utilities - the building blocks of public health - also cannot be disrupted. Essential governmental entities and key businesses that are keeping this economy going rely on strong and safe infrastructure at all levels.

In the short term, our services are needed to support the COVID19 response. In the long-term projects that keep New Orleans residents working will enable our economy to recover faster.

We fully support your decision to not shut off or delay critical infrastructure projects and urge you to stand firm in that decision. Continued progress on ongoing infrastructure projects will provide a much needed and strong economic footing when the inevitable recovery commences.

Thank you for designating construction activity an essential service so that that our industry can continue to provide services and perform work needed for essential infrastructure including, but not limited to: public works construction; commercial and residential construction; permitting; inspection; water; sewer; gas; electrical; roads and highways and designing, constructing  and maintaining Louisiana’s vital petrochemical and manufacturing industry. Every state that has ordered general shutdowns has designated construction activities as an essential service.

Mayor, these are indeed challenging times, but we’ve faced challenging times before. The Louisiana A/E/C industry mobilized after devastating hurricanes and floods and rebounded from economic recessions. Be confident, as we are, in our ability to do it again.

Thank you again for your continued leadership in these critical times.  The undersigned industry members stand ready to assist you and the great city of New Orleans as we move forward together.  Please don’t hesitate to contact us if we can be of any assistance in the weeks and months to come.

Sincerely,

*The Membership of the*

American Council of Engineering Companies of Louisiana

American Institute of Architects Louisiana

Associated Builders and Contractors Louisiana

Associated General Contractors Louisiana

Concrete & Aggregates Association of Louisiana

Louisiana Asphalt Pavement Association