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Keith Pekau

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April 10, 2020

Governor J.B. Pritzker  
Office of the Governor  
James R. Thompson Center  
100 W. Randolph, 16-100  
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Governor Pritzker:

The Village of Orland Park, its residents and businesses have been doing their part to follow your Executive "Stay at Home" Order. I recognize the difficult task that you have in keeping our residents safe while simultaneously trying to keep the economy moving forward. Many of our essential business, such as grocery stores and home improvement stores are seeing a daily influx of people as high as 2,000 to 3,000 per day. In some cases this amounts to over 30 customers per 1,000 square feet per day. These businesses have done an outstanding job of ensuring that their customers and employees remain safe and that social distancing rules are followed.

As we enter the end of the third week of this order, it appears that the worst of the first wave of the pandemic is behind us. The weather is improving and we are starting to see more people leave their homes for both exercise and "essential business." I expect that this trend will continue as people seek a sense of normalcy.

With this in mind, I respectfully request that you allow for the staged reopening of certain business segments in Illinois, provided sensible guidelines are put in place. There are a number of business segments that I believe can reopen without negatively impacting the COVID-19 recovery efforts. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Craft stores (e.g. Hobby Lobby, Michael's and Joann Fabrics)** – these stores provide crafts that are essential for the e-learning that is currently required. Also, they sell goods that can be used to make protective face coverings, as well as providing materials for hobbies that can encourage more people to stay at home for long periods of time.
- **Golf Courses** – The Executive Order specifically indicates that outdoor exercise is encouraged. The golf industry has worked with the governor to put in place guidelines that allow for social distancing during play. Additionally, on average a golf course spans over 200 acres and has only 300 to 400 players, maximum per day. That is a density of over 600 times less than inside a grocery store.
- **Appliance Stores** – Large big box stores such as Home Depot and Best Buy can sell these appliances. However, smaller, local retailers cannot be open under the current order. They have been put at a disadvantage and have their survival threatened. The density of customers in their shops is far less than other essential businesses that are presently permitted to remain open.

- **Competitors of Big-Box Retailers** - The supply chain networks of big-box retailers have been invaluable during the COVID-19 shutdown. They have ensured that residents are able to get their day-to-day goods and supplies throughout this crisis. Unfortunately, the smaller competitors of big-box retailers are not able to open their businesses and this is placing them in a competitive disadvantage. Because only a few large retailers are open, there is an unnecessary concentration of individuals in a given place. By reopening smaller businesses, the number of people can be spread-out over a wider area. Opening smaller businesses such as nurseries would allow residents to occupy their time during their stay-at-home period while beautifying their home, get outside exercise by gardening at their own home, all while encouraging more people to stay at home for long periods of time.
- **State Parks** - Our experience in Orland Park is that the walking and biking trails of the Cook County Forest Preserve System have been a great outlet for our residents. The areas of our state that are served by the State Parks deserve to have a similar outlet. The density of users in state parks is substantially less than other locations permitted to remain open.

I am hopeful that you would consider granting these requests. All of these openings have far less density than the current existing “essential businesses” and could be safely opened to the public provided common sense social distancing policies are enacted. Additionally, it would help Illinois residents return to a sense of normalcy while starting our economy on the road to recovery. Moreover, it would be a sensible first step in the re-opening of our entire economy which I am sure we would both like to see as soon as possible.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request and for your efforts during these difficult times.

Sincerely,



Keith Pekau  
Village President, Village of Orland Park

The following municipal leaders have signed onto this letter.



**John Mahoney**  
Mayor, Palos Park

