

TEXAS HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES



DREW SPRINGER

DISTRICT 68

March 18, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Office of the Governor
State Insurance Building, 1100 San Jacinto
Austin, Texas 78701

RE: Agriculture is an "Essential Business"

Governor Abbott:

We are concerned that recent proclamations and directives regarding COVID-19 from the executive branch have not included agriculture in the definition of "Essential Businesses." Typical "essential businesses" we have seen listed in Texas and other states include pharmacies, grocery stores, gas stations, first responders, critical infrastructure, et cetera. So, while grocery stores might be covered, the primary industry that supplies them with the food they sell is not included. Therefore, we are asking that you please alter any past and future proclamations or advisories to include agriculture and agriculture-related business in the definition of "Essential Businesses."

Numerous states have started initiating total lockdowns or have left the decision to local governments. Texas is undoubtedly not too far behind as you have wisely activated the Texas National Guard, and the COVID-19 disease progresses. As Chairman of Agriculture in the House and Chairman of Water and Rural Affairs in the Senate, we are concerned about the effect on spring crops if all of the employees related to agriculture and food production are required to stay home. Let alone just keeping up with the run on food and sundries at local grocery stores.

Ideally, we would like to see all agriculture operations in "Essential Business," include but not limited to the growing or harvesting of crops or the raising of fowl or animals for the primary purpose of making a profit, providing a livelihood, or any supporting businesses that help bring food from farm to table, such as food processing, meat plants, and to of course local grocery stores.

Respectfully Submitted,

Handwritten signature of Drew Springer in black ink.

Rep. Drew Springer,
House Chairman of Agriculture

Handwritten signature of Charles Perry in black ink.

Sen. Charles Perry,
Senate Chairman of Water and Rural Affairs

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