



**American
Iron and Steel
Institute**

25 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20001
Phone 202.452.7146
Fax 202.452.1039
E-mail tjbson@steel.org

www.steel.org

Thomas J. Gibson
President and Chief Executive Officer

March 24, 2020

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Chairman
National Governors Association
444 North Capitol Street, Suite 267
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Governor Hogan:

On behalf of the U.S. producer member companies of the American Iron and Steel Institute and its associate members who play a critical role in the steel industry supply chain, I write to urge the National Governors Association (NGA) to advise leaders in all states to designate the steel manufacturing sector, its suppliers and its workers as “essential” when drafting and enforcing stay-at-home orders and other directives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We appreciate the efforts of state government officials to limit the spread and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As businesses across the nation have been ordered by many state and local governments to limit or cease operations in recent days, many states have specifically exempted industrial manufacturing, including the steel industry and its suppliers, as “essential.” Although steel mills are generally concentrated in a few geographic regions, the industry’s supply chains span virtually the entire country.

The Cyber and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), lists the iron, steel and ferro-alloy manufacturing sector as a critical manufacturing sector. The sector is also vital to several other critical infrastructure sectors including transportation, energy and public water suppliers as a provider of critical materials. Indeed, as the Secretary of Commerce determined in 2018, steel is important to national security well beyond obvious defense applications to encompass critical infrastructure and transportation, electric power and energy generation systems, as well as water systems. Without access to a reliable source of steel production during this crisis, our national and economic security will be severely impacted.

CISA recently issued important guidance on the identification of essential critical infrastructure workers who should maintain their normal work schedule during the COVID-19 response.¹ This guidance identifies as essential workers necessary for the manufacturing of materials and products needed for medical supply chains, and for supply chains associated with transportation, energy, communications, food and agriculture, chemical manufacturing, nuclear facilities, the operation of dams, water and wastewater treatment, emergency services, and the defense industrial base. Additionally, workers needed to maintain the continuity of these manufacturing functions and associated supply chains are identified as essential.

Several states have incorporated by reference this CISA guidance in exempting critical industries and their workers in stay-at-home orders issued in recent days. Others have explicitly extended exemptions to steel and steel product manufacturers including the manufacture, distribution and supply chain for critical products and industries.

Steel manufacturing is essential to the vital infrastructure necessary to combat the deepening COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore critical that steel manufacturing facilities, supply chains and their workers be exempt from stay-at-home and other such requirements imposed by state and local governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

AISI and its members appreciate your leadership of the National Governors Association during this crisis. As NGA provides support and assistance to governors nationwide who are taking steps to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, we ask the NGA to expressly recognize these facilities and their workers in each state are “essential” to the nation’s COVID-19 pandemic response.

Respectfully,



Thomas J. Gibson
President and Chief Executive Officer
American Iron and Steel Institute

cc: Bill McBride, Executive Director
National Governors Association

¹ See <https://www.cisa.gov/identifying-critical-infrastructure-during-covid-19>.