



March 26, 2020

Dear Community Leaders of America,

On behalf of the Asian American Hotel Owners Association, I am asking for your support for America's hoteliers during this health and financial crisis caused by the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. AAHOA represents nearly 20,000 small business owners who own nearly 50% of all hotel properties in the United States. Our members are predominantly franchisees who own and operate their own small businesses and license the names and standards of well-recognized hotel brands. Moreover, AAHOA members employ more than 600,000 American workers and contribute to the national economy through job creation, real estate development, and community investment.

For hotel owners across your community, the primary objective during this outbreak has been to ensure the health and safety of guests and employees at our properties. Since the first cases of the coronavirus were reported in the United States, hoteliers have implemented increased sanitation protocols, provided specialized training to staff, and doubled down on the monitoring of our facilities. As hospitality professionals and service industry employers, hoteliers are wholly committed to caring for both the guests that stay with us and the dedicated employee partners who serve those guests.

As the nation's leaders consider emergency measures to protect the American people from the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, AAHOA implores your community to recognize the essential nature of hotels and motels during this crisis. They simply must be considered "essential services" in the context of any disaster declaration and kept open during this unprecedented crisis.

Hotels are important in providing lodging to the general public as well as other essential personnel (doctors, nurses, healthcare provider, grocers etc.) during this pandemic. Hotels are also stepping up to work with your state and local governments to provide shelter to citizens at this critical time. There are thousands of people in your state currently staying in hotels who would be rendered homeless if hotels are not deemed essential and forced to close. Many hotel guests live in our hotels and motels for months at a time or longer. Some of these longer-term guests are members of the most vulnerable population groups in your state. These individuals can least afford to bear the brunt of an inopportune closure of what is often their only housing option. Lastly, it should also be noted that an abrupt increase in the homeless population will only serve to compound the spread of this dangerous, novel virus.

We respectfully urge you to help coordinate local policies that consider the important role of hotel and lodging facilities and ensure these businesses are deemed "essential" during any emergency declarations.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions. We are here to help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cecil P. Staton', written in a cursive style.

Cecil P. Staton
President and CEO