



NATIONAL INDEPENDENT AUTOMOBILE DEALERS ASSOCIATION

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March 24, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
Office of the President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The National Independent Automobile Dealers Association (NIADA) is the national trade association representing the interests of more than 38,000 licensed independent, used car dealers not affiliated with any manufacturer. NIADA's members embody the spirit of American entrepreneurship and are, by every criteria of the Small Business Administration, small businesses looking to survive in the best and worst of times. Most importantly, they provide vital transportation needs for millions of Americans needing to get to work, school and medical appointments.

During the midst of this pandemic, we recognize it may be necessary to limit the flow of commerce and encourage social distancing with the goal of slowing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. As the nation's leaders consider appropriate measures to protect the American people from the spread of the virus, such as restricting commerce to essential businesses or services, we believe it is critical to ensure that public policies safeguard the ability of essential businesses and services to continue operations. To that end, **I am writing today to request your clarification that automobile sales and leasing at independent automobile dealers is an essential service permissible during the pandemic.**

On March 19, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) issued "Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce: Ensuring Community and National Resilience in COVID-19 Response." That document lists a litany of businesses and services the administration believes are essential, auto maintenance and repair facilities as essential services but is silent as to automobile sales or leasing. **We ask that you amend the CISA document to include sales and leasing as essential services.**

NIADA believes it is critical to safeguard those businesses and services identified by the administration in the CISA document as essential. However, NIADA believes it is equally important to safeguard those businesses that enable essential services to continue uninterrupted. Most, if not all, of those engaged in essential services will need reliable transportation to move to and from their jobs, purchasing food and medicine or caring for loved ones. As such, we have an obligation to ensure that motor vehicles remain safe and are properly maintained – a fact recognized by the administration in specifically listing auto maintenance and repair facilities as “essential.”

As state and local governments increasingly issue orders limiting the types of businesses that may remain open, some jurisdictions have taken the position that motor vehicles sales is not essential even if permitting automobile repair and maintenance operations to continue uninterrupted. Whether in times of crisis or not, repairing a vehicle may not be a viable option: the vehicle may be declared a total loss, parts may not be available, the vehicle may simply be worn out, or it may not be economically feasible to repair it. In these instances, the American consumer may have an immediate need to replace the vehicle. Stated differently, the only repair might be a different vehicle. Those consumers may not be able to afford a new vehicle or they may live in communities without a new car franchise nearby. They will need the sales and leasing (and perhaps financing) services an independent dealer can provide.

NIADA will continue to encourage all independent dealers to place the safety of their customers and employees first. Independent dealers are adaptable and many are utilizing all available social distancing and other means to make sales, service, and repair processes safe for all parties involved.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. The NIADA staff and members are available to you and your administration at any time as you navigate the country through the current crisis.

At Your Service,



Steve Jordan
CEO

cc: The Honorable Mike Pence, Vice President of the United States
The Honorable Steven Mnuchin, Secretary of the Treasury
The Honorable Elaine Chao, Secretary of Transportation
The Honorable Eugene Scalia, Secretary of Labor
The Honorable Wilber Ross, Jr., Secretary of Commerce
The Honorable Chad Wolf, Acting Secretary of Homeland
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader, United States Senate
The Honorable Charles Schumer, Minority Leader, United States Senate
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader, United States House of
Representatives
The Governors of the 50 States