



## NEW YORK STATE BUILDERS ASSOCIATION, INC

Lewis Dubuque | Executive Vice President

Kristin Savard | President

Governor Cuomo is providing bold and determined leadership in this time of unprecedented crisis caused by the current COVID-19 epidemic. The governor has a difficult and often thankless task of changing the most basic of human traits — socializing with others, in order to prevent the spread of the killer coronavirus.

All citizens and businesses in New York must affirmatively respond to Governor Cuomo's efforts to enforce social distancing. The residential construction industry has worked diligently with the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB) to arrive at new stringent safety protocols to respond to COVID-19.

Single-family home construction is uniquely able to provide social distancing. Limitation on the number of workers committed to working at one time is necessary and easily implemented. A single-family work-site contrasts starkly with the closed quarters found in high-rise construction.

The Empire State Development Corporation's recent determination on construction found "affordable" (undefined) high-rise construction is essential, but single-family home construction is nonessential. A number of businesses have recently moved from nonessential to essential by adopting appropriate social distancing methods including car dealers and realtors.

Residential single-family home and low-rise construction needs serious consideration because there are many home construction sites throughout the state which are in various states of being unfinished. The construction sites provide an attractive danger for children who are now home. These sites are especially attractive for vandalism. These sites are also zombie homes in the making, especially if contractual obligations and building loans are defaulted on. There are many unanswered questions surrounding what work is required to make a house safe in order to comply with the recent shut down of residential construction.

The residential construction industry wants to continue to provide quality housing to New York residents in a way which ensures the safety of its workers. There are unfinished single family homes and low rise rental properties that are unavailable for occupancy based on the current stop work requirement. This is a public appeal to Empire State Development to work with the residential construction industry to ensure the safety measures combined with social distancing are implemented so that residential construction can be essential for all housing not just affordable housing.

At a minimum new safety protocols should enable open worksites to be safely shut down so the building is enclosed if residential construction is not otherwise permitted to continue under strict work rules. A comprehensive definition of a safe closure should be implemented on a statewide basis to avoid the current situation where there are differing measures applied by local building code officials..

The residential housing industry remains ready to work diligently at this difficult time to provide innovative ways to respond to this crisis by continuing to provide employment and shelter for New York State's residents.