



COMMONWEALTH
OF
MASSACHUSETTS
Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053



April 6, 2020

Governor Charles D. Baker
Office of the Governor
24 Beacon Street, Room 360
Boston, MA 02133

Governor Baker,

As the chairs of the Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus we write today to address concerns that have arisen in the Sporting community over actions taken against firearm retailers and sportsmen in the state during the COVID-19 pandemic. The caucus is a bi-partisan, bi-cameral organization with the goal of protecting the rights of sportsmen across the Commonwealth.

We are writing to ask for your consideration in amending the Administration's "COVID-19: Essential Services" designation to include firearm retailers and public shooting range facilities. While we support and appreciate the concerns you have expressed regarding the need for social distancing during these unprecedented times, we believe that these highly regulated industries are well prepared and able to institute additional restrictions, including lawfully excluding all out-of-state residents to address these concerns.

As you know, firearm retailers were one of the few business types that were declared ineligible for the Massachusetts emergency small business loans. While the federal government has included firearm retailers as an essential service, your actions on March 31st altered their status in the Commonwealth, and as a result these small businesses have been forced to shut their doors without any form of financial assistance. We believe that this harms these businesses unilaterally, and that these sales can occur safely, and within the appropriate health guidelines the administration has established if allowed to operate.

In regards to public shooting ranges, we encourage you to allow them to operate with appropriate safeguards in place to encourage social distancing. While under normal circumstances these areas invite and encourage personal interactions, when handled appropriately in accordance with the new public health standard during this crisis they should be able function, and we encourage the implementation of a reservation system to ensure that crowds do not congregate at these facilities.

Additionally, we would like to request that you implement an emergency order extending all firearm license applications for the duration of the state of emergency. While other industries have seen a similar automatic licensure extension implemented, firearm holders in the State are beginning to approach renewal dates with a backlog of applications at a time when the State's law enforcement resources could be directed elsewhere. We believe this would be a small, but smart gesture, as it would relieve the burden on law enforcement and our constituents during these stress-provoking times.

We appreciate your consideration towards these requests. During these stressful times many sportsmen and women turn towards these time-honored traditions as an avenue of escape. We hope you'll consider taking these steps to protect and support the hunting and recreational shooting community, and encourage our constituents to enjoy the outdoors in a safe, and healthy manner.

Sincerely,

Anne M. Gobi
Senate Chair

David T. Vieira
House Chair