

March 24, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor, State of Ohio
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

Dear Governor DeWine:

The Irrigation Association is the national trade association representing companies that manufacture, distribute, install and maintain commercial and residential irrigation systems and technologies. With a mission to “promote efficient irrigation,” our goal is to ensure our nation’s water infrastructure is protected.

The commercial and residential irrigation industry stands with the state of Ohio during the COVID-19 public health emergency. We thank you for all you are doing to keep Ohioans safe, while ensuring essential services are readily available to those in need. It’s imperative that Ohioans have access to services that keep them safe and Ohio’s infrastructure reliable.

While irrigation is a core component to managing commercial and residential properties, it’s also a core component of Ohio’s water infrastructure. While many homes rely on the public water supply for irrigation, the science and engineering behind an irrigation system keeps our public water supply and the customer’s water supply safe, while ensuring our communities are safer and cleaner through a living managed landscape.

In your executive order, dated March 23, 2020, the following are listed as being essential in Ohio during this public health emergency:

Building, construction, and other trades, including, but not limited to, plumbers, electricians, exterminators, operating engineers, cleaning and janitorial staff for commercial and governmental properties, security staff, HVAC, painting, moving and relocation services, and other service providers who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety,

sanitation, and essential operation of residences, Essential Activities, and Essential Businesses and Operations.

With the public's health, safety and welfare in mind, we believe that commercial and residential irrigation should be included in essential services:

- We are entering the spring months when many irrigation systems will be turned on by the homeowner/property manager. It is imperative that these systems are professionally inspected (in accordance with state and local codes and regulations), ensuring there are no leaks and the backflow prevention device is operating properly. **This simply protects home's plumbing system as well as Ohio's public water supply.**
- Properly maintained landscapes and greenspaces lessen crime and reduce injuries, reducing the strain on our already-stressed health care system.
- **Properly run irrigation systems do not waste water. We need to ensure water is available for all uses during this health emergency. Ensuring irrigation systems are doing their job and running properly is an essential component in protecting Ohio's water supply.**

Our industry is taking significant steps to ensure their businesses are being run in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as state and local guidelines. The Irrigation Association continues to be a resource for our members, the industry and the government in protecting our public's health.

Unfortunately, some irrigation professionals are told by local police officials to not perform any critical irrigation line work, as the irrigation professionals are trying to protect the state's and their commercial and residential customers' water supplies. **We hope that you will clarify that irrigation professionals, like plumbers, are essential for the health and wellbeing of all Ohioans.**

We stand with you and our nation's public officials in addressing this public health emergency, while providing these essential services.

Sincerely,



John Farner
Government and Public Affairs Director