



May 4, 2020

State Government Representative

RE: Equine Industry Re-Opening After Stay at Home Order

Dear **STATE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE**:

Thank you for your guidance on working to get the equine industry safely re-opened. As background, we are licensed, professional horsemen and women with deep roots in the equine industry in **STATE**. We are members of the American Hackney Horse Society, American Morgan Horse Association, American Road Horse & Pony Association, American Saddlebred Horse Association, Arabian Horse Association, United Professional Horsemen's Association and the United States Equestrian Federation, which is the national governing body of all equine sports across the United States. These associations have thousands of members in **STATE** whose sole income relies on the boarding, training, teaching, breeding and sales of horses. A large portion of the show horse industry represented here competes, and is successful, at the world and national level.

Across **STATE**, there are thousands of equine businesses that have been closed since the Stay at Home Orders have been in effect. As stated, the income for these businesses relies almost solely on revenue from riding lessons, horse shows, transport of horses to and from shows, and the purchase and sales of show horses. As a result of the Orders, one-third of the 2020 show season has already been lost and we are on hold for the foreseeable future. For many of the equine businesses, horse shows and transportation are their largest source of income. Also, as a result, the market for show horses is currently at a standstill. Perhaps the largest impact affecting all equine businesses, large and small, is the inability to teach riding lessons. Not only has the profit come to a halt, but expenses for these have increased severely.

These facilities have an enormous overhead that other small businesses do not have; the care and feeding of the horses that do not know what COVID-19 is. To put it in perspective, the average riding lesson brings in \$50/

half hour. Whether your program is large or small, the money brought in through teaching is what covers the cost of the care, maintenance, farrier, vet and feed for lesson horses. Mid-range programs teach approximately eighty riding lessons a week. This lack of lesson income increases the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the farm owner. Above and beyond the care and maintenance of the horses, equine businesses must also continue payment of the mortgage on the property, payroll, employees housing fees, utilities, insurance, auto and equipment payments, and many more farm related expenses. Needless to say this is a very difficult time for equine business owners and it is imperative that we find revenue sources before barns have to shut their doors and our rescue agencies become inundated.

We are requesting that equine businesses be added to any Phase One introduction to the return of work in **STATE**. Riding lessons are a non-contact sport like golf or tennis. Riding rings are large and unless there was an immediate need to assist, lessons can easily continue within the current social distancing regulations. We have worked with a task-force assigned by the Joint Leadership Committee which consists of the Presidents of all of our national breed associations to develop Best Practices that conform to CDC regulations. The Best Practices will be distributed across the state (and nationally) to be implemented upon the re-opening of our equine businesses. Although we desperately want to re-open our businesses, we also want to do it slowly and safely for ourselves, our staff and our clients. Please review the attached presentation on our proposal to safely re-open our businesses.

Thank you again for your time and guidance. If you have any questions you can email one of us or call me at **CONTACT**. We will also be available to join any meeting/presentation remotely to answer any questions that you and the Task Force may have.

Sincerely,