April 20, 2020

The sun was shining over the U.S. Capitol today and, in what we hope is a sign of good things to come, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell just amended the upper chamber’s schedule to meet tomorrow in the hopes of reaching a deal on a “phase four” coronavirus relief package, including much-needed funds for the Paycheck Protection Program. Lawmakers could vote as early tomorrow, and AEM has been in close contact with Congressional leadership and the White House to urge them to get a deal done as soon as possible.

The news from the U.S. Senate comes as AEM sent a letter to Congressional leaders this afternoon, urging them to authorize additional funding for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) as part of any deal reached this week. As we reported last week, the PPP is out of money and currently unable to support small and medium-sized equipment manufacturers.

Late Friday, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced a $19 billion relief program for farmers. This program includes cash payments and farm product purchase that will be redistributed to food banks across the country.

Here are some of the other updates from today:

**AEM Urges Congress to Replenish Paycheck Protection Program Funding**

This afternoon, AEM President Dennis Slater sent a letter to U.S. Senate and House leadership encouraging bicameral, bipartisan collaboration to replenish appropriations for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which recently exhausted funds appropriated to the program through the CARES Act. The letter also reminded Congressional leadership of equipment manufacturers’ priorities during the pandemic, including designating equipment manufacturers, as well as their suppliers and distributors, as essential and providing state and local officials with a clear and consistent directive moving forward; ensuring that the demand for equipment remains strong by keeping contractors on projects, farmers in the field, and utilities operating; and providing liquidity to equipment manufacturers of all sizes in order to protect the 2.8 million men and women working in the industry.

**I Make America Supporters Step up to Push for More funds for PPP**

*I Make America*, AEM’s national grassroots advocacy campaign, has mobilized its more than 40,000 supporters across the country to reach out to their elected officials and urge them to reach a bipartisan deal for more money for the PPP. Manufacturing voters from California to
Texas and Wisconsin to Kentucky are e-mailing their elected representatives with a simple message: Equipment manufacturers are out of time and money, and need Congress to take decisive action this week.

Please feel free to share the call-to-action with your colleagues, partners, and friends so that they can help support this effort.

**USDA Releases $19 Billion Relief Plan**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced a $19 billion relief program combining direct payments to producers and $3 billion in commodity purchases for distribution through food banks and faith-based organizations. This support is being administered through the Commodity Credit Corporation, as well as $9.5 billion allocated for livestock producers in the most recent stimulus package.

Direct payments will be “based on actual losses for agricultural producers where prices and market supply chains have been impacted and will assist producers with additional adjustment and marketing costs resulting from lost demand and short-term oversupply for the 2020 marketing year caused by COVID-19,” according to USDA. The commodity purchases will be targeted toward fresh produce, dairy and meat products. AEM joins the agricultural community in pushing for additional support in any recovery bills Congress considers.

**State Activities**

AEM has been monitoring activities taken by Governors as they continue to issue closure orders and other guidance, and we are in close contact with their staff to make the case that our industry should be deemed “essential.”

Notable for today’s update is that the Governor of Indiana extended the duration of the previous stay at home order. The Governors of Arkansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Vermont announced the indicators needed before reopening the state. New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf, Delaware Governor John Carney, Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo, and Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker announced their appointees to the multi-state council to restore their economies and get residents back to work.

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf announced that public and private residential and non-residential construction may resume statewide starting May 8, in accordance with safety guidelines. Governor Wolf’s announcement follows AEM’s letter expressing the importance of construction projects for local economies and our members.

AEM continues to engage with Governors, communicating the vital role the construction industry place in states’ economies.
The map below summarizes each state’s status. For all of the latest information, please visit our dedicated state by state tracker.

Map as of April 20

Many states have implemented initiatives that halt various economic activities
Business-related state mitigation strategies
AS OF APRIL 20, 2020

Canada Activities
The federal government today was focused on responding to the tragic news of the shooting over the weekend out of Nova Scotia.

On Saturday, Prime Minister Trudeau announced $306.8 million in funding to help small and medium-sized Indigenous businesses. Negotiations continue in Ottawa between the federal parties as to how Parliament will function during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Manitoba has announced an additional $300 million to ensure the government can respond quickly to the outbreak.
Saskatchewan has announced that it is working to lift spring road bans for priority goods for agricultural producers.

We continue to update our resources on Canadian activities on AEM’s COVID-19 resources page. You can also click here for the latest updates from Ottawa and all the provinces. Do you have questions or need to get a hold of AEM’s Advocacy Team? E-mail our Response Team at responseteam@aem.org with any questions or feedback.

As always, if you have any questions about AEM’s ongoing efforts, need assistance with a specific issue, or would like to share how the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic is impacting your business, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at keideberg@aem.org.

Best,
-Kip

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