May 22, 2020

**PROGRAMMING NOTE:** In observance of Memorial Day, we will not be sending an update on Monday. Our next update will be on Wednesday, May 27.

AEM’s Advocacy Team continues to advance the industry’s policy priorities with the U.S. Congress and the White House, while working to ensure that equipment manufacturers are poised to help lead the recovery and renewal of the American economy.

This week, AEM sent a letter to U.S. Senate Health Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and House Education and Labor Committee Chairman Bobby Scott (D-VA.) and Ranking Member Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.), urging them to support workforce development in future COVID-19 relief packages.

We are also monitoring the recently introduced SMART Act. This bipartisan legislation would provide $500 billion in emergency funding to local communities and states across the country, prioritizing those with the most need.

You will also find updates from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), as well as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and we have also outlined Canadian government assistance programs and workplace guidance.

Finally, we would like to wish everyone a peaceful Memorial Day Weekend as we honor and remember the fallen men and women who sacrificed their lives for our freedom.

Here are some of the day’s other developments:

**AEM Urges Congress to Support Workforce Development in Letter to Committee Leadership**

Earlier this week, AEM, as a member of the Jobs and Careers Coalition, sent a letter to Committee leadership in the House and Senate on workforce development priorities as they relate to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. The letter, sent to Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-Wash.) on the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, as well as Chairman Bobby Scott (D-VA.) and Ranking Member Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) on the House Committee on Education and Labor, outlines a number of important
of provisions that the coalition would like to see Congress consider, including increased Perkins Career and Technical Education program funding, short-term Pell Grants, and increased funding for apprenticeships both registered and industry-recognized.

**Bipartisan SMART Act Introduced to Deliver Local and State Emergency Funding**

This week, bipartisan legislation was introduced in both the House and Senate that would provide $500 billion in emergency funding to every state, county and community in the country, while prioritizing assistance to the areas with the greatest need. S. 3752/H.R. 6954, the State and Municipal Assistance for Recovery and Transition Act or SMART Act, ensures that funds can be used to help state and local governments meet demand for and expand testing and contact tracing of the coronavirus, and prevent state and municipal layoffs or reductions to essential services. The legislation also expressly prohibits funds from being deposited in pension funds. We are likely to see some form of this legislation in the next coronavirus response package.

We encourage you to read this op-ed by one of the bill’s co-sponsors, U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy (R-La.) for more details about the bill.

**CDC Releases Plan to Support State and Federal Reopening**

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has released a detailed document with its strategy to support state and federal reopening plans. The strategy includes guidance on monitoring the state of health care systems, contact tracing, and testing. It also includes guidance on a phased reopening for businesses that were temporarily closed due to social distancing and stay at home orders. We encourage you to review the document.

**OSHA Revises Enforcement Policies as State Reopen**

The Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has issued two updated enforcement policies to ensure employers are taking action to protect employees:

- Increased in-person inspections at all types of workplaces
- New enforcement policy for recording cases of coronavirus

OSHA’s guidance emphasizes that employers must make reasonable efforts, based on the evidence available to the employer, to ascertain whether a particular case of coronavirus is work-related. View the new policy in detail.

**AEM Outlines Canadian Government Assistance Programs and Workplace Guidance**

The Government of Canada continues to rollout COVID assistance programs for negatively impacted businesses. To assist companies as they try to access these support programs, AEM has created a document summarizing the programs. In addition, we are updating our workplace guidance document as provinces continue to announce reopening plans.

**State Activities**

AEM has been monitoring activities taken by Governors as they continue to issue closure and
reopening orders. We are in close contact with their staff to make the case that our industry is establishing health and safety protocols to protect both employees and customers.

Notable for today’s update is that the Governors of Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania have announced the resumption of limited operations for certain businesses in the coming days. The Governor of Texas published important guidance and information for businesses.

Now that state governments are transitioning into re-opening strategies, we are providing a new U.S. map showing when state shelter-in-place orders and stay-at-home advisories expire.

For all of the latest information, please visit our dedicated state by state tracker.

Canada Activities
Minister of Finance Bill Morneau and Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry Navdeep Bains have announced the opening of the application process for the government’s Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility (LEEFF). Additional information on the application process is available on the Canada Development Investment Corporation (CDEV) website.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced an expansion to the eligibility criteria for the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) to include many owner-operated small businesses. More details, including the launch date for applications under the new criteria, will follow in the days to come.
The Prime Minister has also announced that under an agreement with the U.S. administration, the border will remain closed for another 30 days.

Today’s highlights from the provinces include:

- **Manitoba:** As of May 17, the province has extended the provincewide state of emergency as of for a period of 30 days.
- **Ontario:** The province has announced it has extended all emergency orders currently in force until May 29, 2020. It has also announced that schools will remain closed for the rest of the semester.
- **Quebec:** The province has announced that retailers with street access can open as of May 25, and daycares will be allowed to open as of June 1 in the Greater Montreal area.
- **Saskatchewan:** The province has announced the Re-Open Saskatchewan plan moved into Phase 2, allowing for retail stores to open for business.

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 respondsteam@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

Kip Eideberg
Senior Vice President, Government & Industry Relations
Association of Equipment Manufacturers