



West Tennessee
Chapter

March 18, 2020

Via Email (officeofthemayor@shelbycountyttn.gov) and U.S. Mail

Honorable Mayor Lee Harris

160 N. Main, 11th Floor

Memphis, TN 38103

Dear Mayor Harris,

The 214 member companies of the Associated Builders & Contractors of West Tennessee (“ABC”) are concerned about potential government mandated shutdowns of construction projects, similar to the drastic action taken recently in Boston, Massachusetts by Mayor Martin J. Walsh. ABC agrees with our fellow trade industry counterpart, the Associated General Contractors of America, that such an action would be devastating to local workers.

Without the revenue generated by these projects, construction industry companies, such as prime contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and vendors will be unable to pay their employees or meet other financial obligations. Shutting down construction projects will reduce expenditures in the county for materials and equipment, causing a resulting drop in tax revenues. Shuttering these projects will cause an economic ripple across various business and governmental sectors of the county.

ABC and its member companies understand the need to work and operate safely. Local construction companies, like other businesses across the country, are taking steps to ensure the safety and health of their employees in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak, including following guidelines suggested by the CDC. Construction workers commonly wear personal protective equipment, including gloves, face shields and masks, which helps protect them and their co-workers from many construction-related health hazards. These same protective measures, coupled with new steps as suggested by the CDC will provide an additional barrier to COVID-19 not normally adopted in other work environments.

ABC strongly agrees with the Associated General Contractors that given the precautions already in place, an order to halt construction will do little to significantly protect the health and safety of our community. It will go a long way in undermining the region's economic vitality by depriving tens of thousands of workers the wages they will need over the coming days. At the same time, the measure would likely bankrupt many construction firms who have contractual obligations to stay on schedule or face severe financial penalties. It does not make sense to halt construction work, an

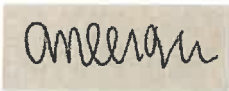
Honorable Mayor Lee Harris

March 18, 2020

Page 2

industry with minimal social interaction between workers and the community, while also not shuttering industries with similar protections, such as manufacturing and distribution. We understand the need for social distancing to help slow the spread of COVID-19. However, needlessly shutting down projects where workers are already protected will not help. Instead it will threaten the livelihood of tens of thousands of Memphians, force many small and family-owned businesses to shut down, and put the public at risk of injury from unsecured construction sites. For these reasons, we urge you to avoid the shutdown of local construction sites.

Sincerely,



Amber Harris, President
Associated Builders & Contractors of West Tennessee



Rick Bennett, General Counsel
Associated Builders & Contractors of West Tennessee