

# WVSSA

Willamette Valley Specialty Seed Association

March 19, 2020

Dear Governor Brown:

While we understand that no “shelter in place” order is currently being contemplated, we also recognize the public health situation and the state’s response to it can change quickly. If it becomes necessary to issue a shelter in place order, we ask that such an order includes agriculture as an essential ongoing public need. While health care facilities and first responders rightfully top the list of essential services, food and fiber production is also critically important to sustaining the ongoing function of our society. Continuity in agricultural food and fiber production is a key to navigating the current crisis and creating a path moving forward.

We believe essential services should include farming, ranching, fishing and all commercial activities in conjunction with cultivation that are necessary for the production, processing, and transportation of agricultural products. Products and processes that happen off-farm are critical to farm production, so a definition should include those activities necessary for farm production (for example, fertilizer delivery to a farm, irrigation and farm equipment repair, fuel delivery, etc.) and for farm products to reach the marketplace in the form consumers need. These associated supply chains for agriculture are critical to its everyday function.

Agriculture relies on specific seasons to produce Oregon’s food, fiber and other farm and ranch products. We are entering a decisive moment as spring arrives. Any interruptions now will have long-lasting and dire consequences for the entire year and perhaps beyond that.

Having spent their life working with biological systems, agricultural producers are keenly aware of the devastating effects diseases and their unchecked spread can have. Agricultural producers and their suppliers are working diligently to ensure they are aware of and are implementing the most up-to-date practices to ensure the wellbeing of their employees and their customers, including sanitation, worker safety, and safe distancing practices. We will continue that effort as new guidance becomes available.

Thank you for your help ensuring farm and ranch families can meet consumer needs in this uncertain time.



Charles Ortiz  
Board of Directors  
Public Relations Chair