



2108 W. Laburnum Ave., Suite 230, Richmond, VA 23227

March 17, 2020

The Honorable Brian Ball
Virginia Secretary of Commerce & Trade

The Honorable Bettina Ring
Virginia Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry

Mr. Travis Hill
Virginia ABC

Dear Secretary Ball, Secretary Ring and Mr. Hill:

The Virginia Craft Brewers Guild represents the independent craft breweries in the Commonwealth. The industry's primary source of revenue is tasting room sales (on-premise and off-premise). The COVID-19 economic impact has been considerable, and we are preparing contingencies to assist the industry "bridge" the next 90 days of economic losses while contributing to the national objective of "flattening the curve" of COVID-19 infections. The industry is practicing social distancing, following quarantine protocol, limiting public gatherings and exceeding industry best practices. To protect public health and support the craft beer industry, we request that the Governor consider the following executive actions for all breweries:

1. Delay Virginia payroll taxes for 90+ days.
2. Delay Virginia sales tax payments for 90+ days (due this Friday).
3. Delay Virginia beer excise tax payments for 90+ days.
4. Direct the ABC to provide an ["IN-STATE DELIVERY PERMIT"](#) to all licensed breweries.
5. Direct ABC to allow for customer "curbside" pick-up of all brewery products as an extension of existing off-premise licenses.
6. Direct ABC to expand the definition of "closed containers" to any container with a lid for off-premise sales.
7. Direct ABC to delay brewery license payments for 90+ days.
8. Direct ABC to eliminate [Sunday restrictions](#) on wholesaler restocking, rotating, repacking and rearranging beer in retail establishments.
9. Expedite U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) [Disaster Assistance Loan Application](#) approvals to two-weeks maximum.
10. Encourage local governments to extend meals tax payments by 90+ days.

The VCBG also wants to commend Governor Northam on his pragmatic and careful approach to this public health crisis. We are particularly appreciative of his decision to waive the one week waiting period before filing for unemployment insurance benefits – this will be incredibly helpful to brewery employees that may be laid off over the coming weeks.

The VCBG and its members take their social responsibility seriously in limiting COVID-19 infections. Members are instituting best-practices to ensure public confidence in our product safety standards, personnel and facilities. A few of these best-practices are listed below:

- VCBG has developed a [COVID-19 Resource Center](#) to improve dissemination of qualified information.
- VCBG will convert its Facebook page into an industry best-practices sharing site.
- VCBG has transitioned all industry meetings and events to webinars until June.
- VCBG is recommending a moratorium on all growler refills for 90 days – only fresh new containers should be filled.
- VCBG is recommending disposable “glassware” for on-premise consumption for 90 days.
- VCBG is recommending PPE for all brewery retail personnel serving customers.
- VCBG is recommending social distancing of 6 feet for all customers and will recommend curbside pick-up with ABC regulatory flexibility.
- VCBG is recommending all brewery personnel complete the [Quality & Safety Training Certificate](#) in the next two weeks.
- VCBG is recommending enhanced industrial hygiene practices for manufacturing spaces and increased sanitation practices for all retail spaces (e.g., hourly wipe down of surfaces).

In closing, we will conduct biweekly meetings with the industry until the public gathering ban is lifted. If the Administration wishes to address the industry at any time, we are glad to make these webinars available to you. The first will be 12 pm tomorrow.

Thank you for considering these requests and making the effort to balance the priorities of a public health crisis with the needs of industry.

Sincerely,

Brett

Brett A. Vassey
President & CEO
Virginia Craft Brewers Guild