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March 20, 2020

Governor Lawrence Hogan
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Governor Hogan,

In times of crisis, we are reminded just how important a home is to the health and stability of every Marylander. Even more critical is the availability of affordable housing for all Marylanders who need it. Our state has faced a shortage of affordable housing units for many years and is currently the eighth most expensive state for housing in the country. While we know that you are forced to make difficult decisions to protect Marylanders during this health crisis, we respectfully request that you allow work to build essential infrastructure such as affordable housing - work that is already underway - to continue during any shutdowns.

There are currently over 53 affordable housing projects under construction and more in the pipeline, being financed and managed by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. These projects represent not only important construction jobs and small businesses that need to keep their doors open, but future affordable housing units that our state needs now more than ever. We cannot afford to delay the construction of these affordable housing units. Contractors have been allowing their jobs to continue and are following all industry guidelines to keep their job sites and their employees safe and secure.

If a shutdown does become necessary, we would ask that you take into consideration the economic impact of these projects. If construction is shut down, insurance claims will begin for buildings that are left open to the elements and construction sites will be left open, causing environmental and security concerns. As you know firsthand, the real estate and construction industry has a severe lag time in putting people back to work because of the entitlement process and the time required for financing.

We are aware that Pennsylvania and Boston have now stopped construction, mainly due to exposure in larger cities where there is the greatest risk of spreading the virus. Affordable housing projects are being allowed to continue in California, and the Virginia Housing Development Authority is working towards this same goal.

We appreciate your strong leadership during these unprecedented times, and we know that you are taking necessary steps to keep all Marylanders safe.

Sincerely,
Miranda Darden-Willems
Executive Director