March 26, 2020

The Honorable GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL’S NAME

STREET ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE

Dear GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL’S NAME:

As a INSERT YOUR STATE NAME independent appliance retailer and family business, we’re focused on the health, safety and sustainability of our employees, families, customers, and community as the continued outbreak of COVID-19 develops. I sincerely appreciate the leadership, quick responses, and continually developing efforts your administration has shown as together, we work to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on both public health and the broad economic implications in our state.

Our business, like many, are following the CDC’s Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers and strive to do our part to help accomplish the goal of slowing the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

Today, perhaps more than at any time in the past, local families are counting on us during this time of crisis, and the we are committed to being there for our customers, our neighbors, and our community. The current and unprecedented pandemic demands that we all work together for the greater good, and our team stands ready to do our part. We believe that as a small, independent business, we are best equipped, best informed, and best able to determine our ability to remain open and serving our community with vital goods and services in this challenging time.

You, along with many leaders in our state, are undoubtedly very deliberately considering which businesses are “essential” and “non-essential” retail for purposes of social distancing, and while doing so, it is critically important not to overlook the important role that independent appliance retailers and servicers play in the safety of residents and their households during this time of crisis.

It’s crucial that we remain open and serving our community. Consumers cannot maintain safe preservation of food and medicine and cannot perform safe preparation of food without access to fully functioning home appliances. Further, studies have shown that the virus can be transmitted via clothing exposed to COVID-19, and as such, fully functioning laundry machines are imperative, and the presence of such machines in private homes will prevent residents in our community from being forced to risk or stress social distancing measures as is inherent to laundromats and public laundry facilities.

Today’s industry data shows that more than 60 percent of major appliance purchases are made under duress for the replacement of products that have failed. Such failures occur daily, and as such, access to quality appliance repair service and replacement is vital. Additionally, the sudden surge in appliance use by those who don’t normally subject their appliances to daily use will see a correlating spike in failures and the needed service or replacements that result.

The products we offer to our community serve critical roles necessary to maintain safe and sanitary homes for those sheltering in place. Among the critical roles played by these products are:

* Refrigerators and freezers are essential for the basic preservation of food and medicine. Today, as consumers are making fewer trips to food suppliers and stockpiling more, food storage and preservation are even more critical.
* Ranges, cooktops and ovens provide necessary food preparation capabilities, and as the population is required to stay in and prepare meals at home the need is greater than normal.
* Automatic dishwashers are essential for sanitizing dishes and utensils which limits the spread of disease. Hand washing of dishes is generally not as sanitary and requires more water.
* Laundry appliances such as clothes washers and dryers which sanitize garments and linens are essential, since, as stated by the CDC, it is possible for COVID-19 to be transmitted via clothing. Those who continue to function outside the home and those who have a single household member who is self-quarantined must be able to sanitize clothing and linens.

It is also our understanding that the Department of Homeland Security’s CISA memorandum on essential workforce guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic specifically designates groceries, pharmacies, convenience stores, and other retail that sells human food, animal/pet food, and beverage products being clearly designated as essential. However, we believe there is an implied obligation that in order to safely preserve and prepare food products, fully functioning appliances in the homes of those in our communities are equally necessary. We urge you to clarify this in your statements to the public, and to clearly designate appliance retailers and servicers as essential in our state.

Finally, it is important to note that our store(S) are equipped to allow for contact-less, curbside pick-up or curbside deliveries, maintaining social distancing and minimizing risk of further COVID-19 spread. Further, we have in place e-commerce solutions that allow consumers to select, purchase and request delivery or pickup of appliances through our secure, transactional website. These capabilities reduce the need to strain in-place social distancing measures in physical store locations, which are in place to serve those with no access or familiarity with shopping for such goods online.

Thank you for your attention to this concern and your ongoing leadership. We stand ready to assist in any way as you consider how to best safeguard our communities.

Sincerely,

XXX XXXX

Title, COMPANY NAME

cc: Tom Hickman, Nationwide Marketing Group, Matthew R. Shay, National Retail Federation, Brian Dodge, Retail Industry Leaders Association