



NGCOA Mid-Atlantic
www.ngcoamidatlantic.org

March 24, 2020

Governor Larry Hogan
State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan:

On behalf of the golf industry in Maryland, thank you for your leadership during this challenging, unprecedented time. COVID-19's effects have been far-reaching across all sectors of life. The Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Owners Association is doing its part to ensure Maryland golf courses are following your Executive Order, and we are grateful for the approval to maintain our courses at this time.

I am writing in consideration of re-opening Maryland golf courses. Our association includes Virginia as well, and Virginia courses remain open, operating safely under strict state guidelines. Same for our neighbors in Delaware.

Health Considerations

This entire situation is all about public health. Please consider the following:

- Walking 18 holes of golf is great exercise – more than five miles and 13,000 steps, burning more than 1,200 calories. It is also a great stress release in these troubled times.
- Golf is the ultimate “social distancing” activity. It is played outdoors on 200 acres in small groups of four people who know each other, spaced roughly 200 yards apart.
- Golf courses are controlled and monitored for safety, unlike public parks, which remain open. There are reports in other states that golfers will play closed golf courses. Operating golf courses can police that and maintain public health standards better than unsupervised, closed facilities.
- The NGCOA has developed a very detailed operating guide to enhance sanitation and safety, going touchless with such measures as online pre-payments, spacing out tee times, removing bunker rakes and coolers, and much more outlined in the [Park & Play Guide](#).

Golf and State Government

Maryland's golf industry is aligned with key interests of government:

- Golf courses preserve large areas of open space in developed areas.

- Golf courses filter storm water runoff.
- The golf industry generates tax revenue.
- Golf provides a recreational public service, so needed in these troubled times.

No other business or land use anywhere in the world does all that at once. Golf courses preserve the environment in a way no other business does or can do, while stimulating the economy and generating tax revenue.

Economic Considerations

- There are over 13,000 Marylanders working in golf-related jobs, and most are out of work.
- There are over 189 golf courses in Maryland currently closed. Most are small businesses.
- Maintenance costs are very high, and there is no revenue to support that. Some courses will either go bankrupt or cut back on maintenance leading to high costs in the future.

Request to Re-open Golf Courses

To summarize, we respectfully request an amendment to your Order to re-open golf courses in Maryland under strict guidelines of COVID-19 public health protocols. Golf courses are important to the health of Marylanders and are perfectly positioned to ensure all guidelines are followed.

Thanks for your consideration and leadership.

Sincerely,



David A. Norman
Executive Director

PS – For clarification or any questions, I may be reached at 804-399-7802 or dnorman008@gmail.com.

cc: Matthew Clark
Kelly Schulz