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March 20, 2020

The Honorable Michael L. Parson
Governor of Missouri
State Capitol
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Governor Parson:

On behalf of our more than 22,000 small business members of Missouri REALTORS®, we want to commend you for your strong leadership during the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. Your administration has been faced with unimaginable circumstances and you have met them with diligence and kindness.

In addition to matters of health and safety, our Association is concerned about the potential impacts the pandemic will have on property owners and residents who are in the process of buying, selling, and leasing homes and other property throughout Missouri. This public health crisis could result in the devastation of the real estate market, which in turn would have serious and long-lasting impacts to the state's economy.

Right now, there are at least 4,000 transactions in the pipeline that started in mid-January; in some cases earlier, houses have been sold in other states, and people are ready to move to Missouri to start new jobs or take a promotion in their company. To interrupt these and future transactions would be a significant blow to the Missouri economy. As you know, residential real estate sales in 2019 in Missouri were over \$17 billion, a large part of the GDP of our state.

In contemplation of further necessary limitations on local and state government services, we seek to minimize potential interruptions within the real estate industry by respectfully requesting that real estate-related services be considered as essential under any future emergency orders. We are especially focused on the county services needed to transfer and record property ownership, but also those services provided by other affiliated industries such as permitting, lending, inspections, construction, and title/closing services.

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Without an express exception for real estate services, any mandated limitations on the physical movement of Missourians could have devastating short and long-term impacts on the economy of Missouri and our citizens. Several states have acknowledged the importance of the real estate industry to the basic economic health of their respective economies.

Please accept this formal request that any “shelter in place” or other orders related to the limitation of movement of people in Missouri include an exception that provides, in substance:

“Essential services related to real estate transactions include, but are not limited to, title searches, appraisals, permitting, inspections, construction, moving, and the recordation, legal, financial and other services necessary to complete a transfer of real property.”

Please know that our members have already taken steps to limit virus transmission by driving in separate cars to property; for the most part, eliminating open houses, restricting the number of people at home inspections, and limiting the number of people at closings.

There remains no doubt the Coronavirus pandemic will disrupt the lives of Missouri residents, but impacts that would be substantial, especially those that are financial, may be lessened if essential real estate services can be continued.

Missouri REALTORS® are ready to partner with you and your administration, and we are eager to work together to protect our members, their clients, and all Missouri citizens during this crisis. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeff Kester, 2020 President

Missouri REALTORS®

