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March 24, 2020

Honorable Governor Gretchen Whitmer  
P.O. Box 30013  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Governor Whitmer,

I understand the tremendous burden of trying to determine the correct strategy for keeping Michiganders healthy while maintaining a reasonably strong system of commerce in our great state. Thank you very much for taking time to consider the following request.

I am the Executive Vice-President/CEO of the Great Lakes Floral Association, representing growers, floral wholesalers, garden centers, and retail florists in Michigan and throughout the Great Lakes Region. Our industry is requesting an exemption to your Executive Order #2020-21 "Stay Home, Stay Safe."

As you may know, Michigan is the nation's third largest grower of specialty crops. Agricultural operations throughout the state are in a constant cycle of planting, tending, harvesting, and shipping flowers, foliage, and plants. Our wholesalers are the conduit through which those products pass to brick-and-mortar retail florists. Those florists, with their same-day, touch less delivery services, provide the vibrant, life-enhancing comfort of fresh flowers and plants to countless thousands of recipients every day.

Fresh flowers are an integral component of funerals, memorial celebrations, and the entire grieving process. The availability of flowers to help complete the cycle of life and death has always been, and will continue to be, vital to the emotional health and stability of grieving families.

Additionally, in this time of world-wide health concerns, it is important to remember that having flowers and plants in the home has been proven, through research studies at Harvard, Rutgers, Texas A&M, and North Florida University, to reduce stress and anxiety while improving health and inter-personal relationships. For your convenience, I have included (below) several links to concise summaries of those research studies.

Our members are not only essential, but also uniquely positioned and committed to help calm the emotional distractions in our citizenry that otherwise might interfere with the practical applications of your "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Executive Order. Therefore, we ask that the agriculture and floriculture industries in Michigan, including retail florists with delivery services, be exempt from all lists of non-essential businesses.

[Rutgers: Flowers Improve Emotional Health](#)

[Health by Design: University Research Reveals Surprising Solution for Relieving Stress](#)

[Rutgers: Flowers Boost Seniors' Well Being](#)

[Harvard: Living with Flowers Strengthens Feelings of Compassion, and Decreases Anxiety and Worry](#)

[Harvard Research: Flowers are the Perfect Pick-Me-Up to Boost Morning Moods](#)

Thank you in advance for your consideration!

Respectfully,

Rodney P. Crittenden  
EVP/CEO