The fight continues with the Covid-19 pandemic. In Washington State, Governor Inslee announced a two week “Stay at Home” order for all “nonessential services” as well as, further limitations on group gatherings and state park closures. The order takes effect Wednesday, March 25th. A general list was provided outlining activities considered to be “essential critical infrastructure workers”, which was not very clear on the impact to general Construction activities.

There are a number of references to infrastructure-based support for transportation, healthcare, energy, pipeline, housing, refineries, etc., so we assume that construction operations are intended to be designated essential. It specifically states: “Construction workers who support the construction, operation, inspection, and maintenance of construction sites and construction projects (including housing construction) for all essential facilities, services and projects included in this document, and for residential construction related to emergency repairs and projects that ensure structural integrity.” This interpretation is consistent with federal guidelines. That said, we are in the process of getting additional clarity from the Governor’s Office. We expect that some projects may be shutdown temporarily and that all projects will have additional safety protocols implemented in order to continue operations. So, unless you hear otherwise from your contractor, employer, or field representative, you are able to continue working.

I want to reinforce that our primary focus is for your safety and if you have any concerns about exposure or your worksite safety conditions, we ask that you alert your employer and your field representative immediately. If you are facing or considering job separation, whether initiated by your employer or you, make certain the reason for the separation is clear to both parties and mutually understood. This will aid in sorting out the variety of economic protections and assistance available in your circumstance.

I understand that some of you are being asked to sign waivers (potentially waiving some of your rights) in order to go to work. You are not required to do that as a condition of employment. You have a right to let one of your representatives review these waivers. I encourage you to take a picture of it and text it to us for review.

We continue to recognize that there is a lot of concern and uncertainty during this time and we will continue to provide any and all information at our disposal. In the meantime, I ask that you remain vigilant in exercising social distancing, handwashing, and limiting your errands within the community. Be safe out there.

Eric Coffelt,
Business Manager