March 16, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Democratic Leader Schumer:

NALP is the national trade organization representing the $82 billion landscape industry in the United States. Member companies specialize in lawn care, landscape maintenance, tree care, irrigation and water management. Landscape professionals throughout the nation work daily servicing homes and businesses to maintain their landscapes, sustain the environment and take pride in our communities by enhancing and maintaining healthy green spaces.

On Saturday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the H.R. 6201, Families First Coronavirus Response Act. One of the primary objectives of this bill is intended to provide immediate payroll relief for those that are directly impacted by the coronavirus. We agree completely with this intent. The Senate is now considering the Act and has the opportunity to make much needed amendments prior to sending to President Trump.

We commend Congress for taking swift action to assist those that are directly impacted by the coronavirus. We acknowledge and understand that those impacted individuals and families need access to wages; but the federal government cannot ask our employers to bear the brunt of this stimulus by asking employers alone to provide unworked wages at the expense of their businesses.

We are respectfully requesting that the Senate take action to amend the funding mechanism for the paid leave mandate of H.R. 6201 and take other steps to ensure that landscape companies have access to capital. Expecting Landscape companies to have the necessary cash to cover wages that are not worked amidst a time that clients will begin suspending their need for our landscape service will devastate our industry and cause further destruction to our national economy.

We suggest the following:

I. Create a new program administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to offer financial assistance/paid sick leave to employees impacted by the coronavirus. A model is offered in H.R. 6198, the Emergency Paid Leave Act of 2020

II. Suspend Payroll taxes

III. Loans/Grants – Provide loans through the Small Business Administration (SBA) for small businesses impacted by the coronavirus and in need of additional capital.
IV. Tax Credits - Allow companies to use current losses to offset profits, incentivize homeowner and business owner to spend on real property improvements.

V. Declare administration personnel tasked with processing guest worker visas as “essential” and “emergency” to ensure processing of these critical program continue during an extended quarantine

Thank you for considering our views. We look forward to working with you at this critical time.

Sincerely

Andrew Bray
Vice President of Government Relations
National Association of Landscape Professionals