



March 20, 2020

The Honorable Roy Cooper
Governor of North Carolina
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Via Email: roy.cooper@nc.gov

Dear Governor Cooper:

On behalf of more than 300 members of the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters (representing nearly 40 television stations and more than 250 radio stations in the State) and more than 150 members of the North Carolina Press Association, we appreciate and thank you for your decisive and critical responses to one of the worst pandemics our state, country, and international community have experienced in more than a century.

These are uncertain, challenging times, and we appreciate the well-informed advice, guidance, and composure you and your administration have conveyed to the public thus far.

As you know, the members of the undersigned Associations represent the broadcast radio and television, print, and digital media industries, and our members work closely—and tirelessly—with government officials and other public and private entities and persons to keep the public accurately informed during times of emergency.

It is imperative that this critical work continue unabated during the COVID-19 crisis.

Without North Carolina-based news media operations, significant numbers of a wide variety of constituents in many communities across the State will be uninformed—or, perhaps worse, *misinformed*—about the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation and critical health, safety, and regulatory information, orders, and guidance. The only way to guarantee the continued flow of timely, accurate news and information during this momentous time is to ensure that members of our Associations (and other news media) can continue to engage in their fundamental purpose and can count on local and State officials to honor and support the efforts of our individual employees as they engage in newsgathering and coverage of developments.

With that in mind, if there is a need to mandate further business shutdowns and/or shelter-in-place programs within North Carolina, the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters and the North Carolina Press Association respectfully request that television and radio broadcasters and print and digital news media entities across the State be exempted from any such mandates and/or restrictions in light of the news media's extraordinarily important, essential public service role at a crucial time like this.

Members of the undersigned Associations (and other media outlets, even if they are not members of our organizations) must be able to continue to inform the public about their health, safety and welfare, including critical health and local response information from Government officials at the local, state, and federal levels during this crisis. Similar exemptions have been granted in Colorado, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, San Francisco, and in other state and local jurisdictions.

In Pennsylvania, for example, in announcing that all but “life-sustaining” businesses in the state must shut down immediately, Gov. Tom Wolf included television and radio broadcasting and newspaper businesses as among those businesses that remain open.

