



March 26, 2020

The Honorable Roy Cooper
Office of the Governor
State of North Carolina

RE: Request to Classify Convenience Services and Vending Machine Operators as Essential During Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response

Dear Governor Cooper,

On behalf of The National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA), I would like to thank you for your leadership during these difficult times. I am writing today to urge you to classify the Convenience Services Industry as an essential service during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response in any future executive action limiting operations of non-essential business.

Vending and unattended retail operations are vital during these difficult times, servicing the most essential operations responding to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Vending machines, micro markets, office coffee, tea, water, and pantry services provide over 40 million consumers with food and beverages daily. Specifically, NAMA members keep machines and micro markets in hospitals, schools, police stations, firehouses, truck stops and rest areas, stocked with necessary sustenance to keep our essential response teams going at a time when social distancing is not only encouraged, but required to stop the spread of the virus. And it is all accomplished in an unattended retail environment, often with round the clock availability.

As you may know, the National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) represents the U.S. convenience services industry, with its core membership being comprised of owners and operators of vending machine companies, micro market, office coffee, tea, water, and pantry services providers. With nearly 1,000-member companies – including many of the world’s most recognized brands – NAMA provides advocacy, education and research for its membership. The convenience services industry employs over 150,000 Americans nationally. [Click here](#) to see how the industry impacts North Carolina.

Unattended retail like vending machines and micro markets are self-sufficient and encourage safe, social distancing; not requiring an interaction with a cashier. In fact, earlier this week, the [US Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) and [The US Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#) both issued statements on safety of food and beverage products and packaging as supporting arguments that the industry is safe and vital for nutrition.

Additionally, this week the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) deemed list **“other retail selling food and beverages”** as essential in its [Memorandum on Identification of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During COVID-19 Response](#), released yesterday (also attached).

Thank you again for your service during these trying times, and we hope to work together with you to ensure Americans continue to have access to clean food and water.

Please feel free to reach out to our team at 571-348-9899 or contact me directly at mgosicnski@namanow.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Goscinski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and a trailing flourish.

Mike Goscinski
Director, State and Federal Affairs