

May 7, 2020

Dear Members of the Economic Reopening Advisory Board:

Our organizations represent the summer camp industry, making up over 1,400 summer camp programs (Summer Camps) across Massachusetts. Collectively, our programs serve thousands of youth and drive millions of dollars of spending in the Commonwealth every summer. With schools canceled and childcare facilities shut down until June 29th, Summer Camps are in the unique position of mitigating COVID related learning gaps and providing childcare so that businesses can begin reopening. To enable those benefits, the industry has prioritized health and safety by partnering with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other experts to develop critical safety guidance for day and overnight camps.

We write to you to request that the Economic Reopening Advisory Board (Advisory Board) recommend that Summer Camps be allowed to open no later than June 29th and that Summer Camp employees and operators be deemed essential in order to facilitate that opening date.

Economic Impact

In 2016, Massachusetts had 1,410 licensed camps that had a direct economic contribution of \$545 million and a total economic contribution of more than \$1.3 billion. For comparison purposes, in 2016 the direct wages paid by camps of \$222.7 million are about 60% of wages paid by electronics and appliances stores; three-fourths of wages paid by gas stations; about the same as wages paid in the forestry and fishing industry; and more than three times the wages paid in the water transportation industry.

MA	Licensed Camps
Establishments	1,410
Full-time Employment	2,100
Seasonal Employment	37,500
FTE Employment	11,480
Payroll	\$222,690,000
Operating Expenses	\$410,170,000
Capital Expenses	\$91,190,000
Visitor Spending	\$43,490,000
Direct Contribution	\$544,850,000

Childcare and Education

Summer camp is an essential component of the summer season's childcare providing social and emotional learning as well as recreation. Both for-profit and not-for-profit camps throughout Massachusetts provide an essential service with weekday care for thousands of children ages 2-1/2 through 16 that cut across all social and economic lines. Moreover, summer camps serve as a major job resource for hundreds of high school and college-age young people, keeping them both occupied and in a safe camp community.

Health and Safety

Most importantly, our Summer Camps' highest priority is to protect our campers, our

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staff and our families. In order to ensure that safety is first and foremost, the American Camp Association (ACA) and the YMCAs of the United States (Y-USA) are working alongside the CDC to provide guidance and educational resources to day and overnight camps, state and local health departments, and parents/guardians and campers. These resources are being developed by an independent expert panel coordinated by Environmental Health & Engineering, Inc. (EH&E), a Boston-based consulting firm specializing in environmental health. This expert panel includes specialists in pediatric medicine, camp medicine and nursing, epidemiology, infectious disease management, biological safety, industrial hygiene, organizational design, and other technical specialties. Participating in the expert panel are professionals from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Association of Camp Nursing. This Interim guidance is expected to be released to all interested parties by May 8th with actionable field guides to be released by May 18th.

In parallel to this effort, we are working closely with our regulatory agency, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), to ensure that regulations and guidance on how to keep camps safe reflect the expert advice and guidance issued in accordance with EH&E, ACA, Y-USA and the CDC.

Summer Camps, as an industry, work intentionally to limit camper exposure to the virus which is a far better alternative than an open environment with few limitations during the summer. We ask that the Advisory Board allow Summer Camps to open no later than June 29th, in accordance with the rules, regulations and guidance issued by DPH. We also respectfully request that Summer Camp employees and operators be deemed essential by the Governor.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this very important matter. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to any one of us.

Thank you,



The Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs

