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Wolf Administration Releases Information Regarding Approved Business Exemptions

Harrisburg, PA – Today, the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) released information pertaining to the 6,066 approved business exemptions provided to businesses that could offer life-sustaining services or conduct life-sustaining activities across the commonwealth.

“Over the past eight weeks, Pennsylvania has been focused on protecting public health while balancing the needs of our commonwealth’s businesses, and ensuring that those providing life-sustaining services and products can continue operations,” said DCED Secretary Dennis Davin. “While other states also enacted business closures, Pennsylvania was one of the first states to create an exemption process and offer an opportunity to those businesses that believed they could be of service to public health and safety. I appreciate the patience of Pennsylvanians as we worked through the exemption review process. As we begin the process of our measured, data-driven, phased re-opening of counties, we look forward to seeing the economy slowly reopen in a safe and strategic manner.”

A map of approved exemptions by county can be found [here](#).

On March 19, Governor Tom Wolf issued an [order](#) along with the Secretary of Health’s [order](#) indicating that all non-life-sustaining businesses in Pennsylvania must close their physical locations to slow the spread of COVID-19. The exemption process was instituted to identify businesses that offer life-sustaining services or are necessary to assist life-sustaining functions notwithstanding the general closure of the industry in which they operate.

During the past month and a half, a dedicated team of nearly 50 experienced DCED employees reviewed more than 42,000 exemption requests. Of those requests, 6,060 were approved, 12,826 were denied, and 11,635 were notified that their request did not

require an exemption. Another 11,619 submitted applications have since become subject to guidance that is specific to their industries, such as construction projects, golf courses and auto dealers. Quality control measures have been taking place throughout the process to ensure consistency across industries.

“Pennsylvania is home to nearly one million small businesses, and while protecting public health and safety was our number one priority throughout this process, the administration recognized that businesses not identified as life-sustaining warranted the opportunity to operate in some capacity if they could offer life-sustaining services,” Davin said. “Throughout this process, our primary focus was on reviewing exemption applications and assisting businesses with their questions and concerns, all in service of the goal of protecting public health in the face of an unprecedented and quickly evolving public health emergency.”

For the most up-to-date information on COVID-19, Pennsylvanians should visit on.pa.gov/coronavirus or follow the Pennsylvania Department of Health on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).