



September 24, 2020

Commissioner C. Ray Davenport
Virginia Department of Labor and Industry
600 East Main Street, Suite 207
Richmond, VA 23219

Safety and Health Codes Board
Virginia Department of Labor and Industry
600 East Main Street, Suite 207
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Commissioner Davenport and Members of the Safety and Health Codes Board,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce and our more than 700 members place the highest priority on our workforce and customers' health and safety during the ongoing pandemic. In support of this goal, the Chamber has worked, and will continue to work, to share critical information and best practices with community, including our partnership with Arlington Economic Development in creating the Return to the Workplace Toolkit.

Clear and consistent workplace health protection protocols will help Virginia's businesses operate safely, but we believe that the Emergency Temporary Standard for COVID-19 Prevention falls short of this goal. As such, we encourage the Board not to make the Emergency Temporary Standard permanent. Making this standard permanent and potentially adding provisions could place a significant burden on businesses that continue to struggle with the economic consequences of this pandemic.

Moreover, we believe that businesses should have flexibility to apply practices that work best for achieving health and safety in their circumstances. The shifting regulatory landscape continues to be a challenge for their recovery, especially for small businesses. We encourage the Board not to penalize businesses that have given a good faith effort in following these complex and evolving rules.

We thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Bates
President & CEO