

Advocates of the
Food Industry
Since 1900



FOOD INDUSTRY ALLIANCE OF NEW YORK, INC.

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REQUEST FROM THE GROCERY INDUSTRY:

THAT NEW YORK'S LEADERS PROVIDE PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGING ON THE IMPORTANCE & OBLIGATION OF SOCIAL DISTANCING IN STORES

The coronavirus has upended the lives of millions of state residents, and every food retailer in New York is taking the necessary precautions to keep its associates and customers safe in the wake of unprecedented social upheaval. At the same time, we are balancing an unimagined demand for food supplies driven by public fear, media coverage, and the closure of the entire food service sector.

As an industry, food retailers have been adjusting quickly to the new normal of intermittent out-of-stocks and sporadic customer surges. Despite enormous logistical challenges, our state's grocery community has worked around the clock to supply food to New York families while at the same time implementing new policies of social distancing and limiting customer density in stores.

We are taking essential steps in working to flatten the COVID-19 curve in each of the communities we serve. These steps start at our front doors and end as our customers are checking out. We have designed new ways to practice social distancing while still providing a safe, sanitary place to shop. Below is a sampling of the precautions New York's food retailers have put in place:

- Managers along with all store associates are being trained on social distancing techniques & general health best practices. These communications have become part of daily management routines. Stores are adhering to CDC recommended guidelines.

- Senior hours for customers 60+ every day. Many retailers are offering special hours for older customers or customers with weakened immune systems to help reduce crowds and help our most vulnerable customers practice social distancing while shopping.
- Online fulfillment: retailers have a substantial infrastructure in place for order and delivery of groceries. Retailers are increasing those capabilities across the state's entire supply chain, and this is helping reduce the number of customers coming into stores.
- Closed all in-store cafes and seating areas. These areas are closed in order to prevent customers from gathering and sitting closely to one another.
- Numerous stores are installing clear plastic guards at registers. Because the register area doesn't allow for the cashier and customer to maintain a distance of 6 feet apart per CDC guidelines, plexiglass guards are being added for additional protection in one of the most vulnerable areas.
- Whenever possible, we are opening only every other register lane to create further distancing between customers at checkout instead of opening lanes right next to each other.
- Many stores will have signage that reminds customers to stand at least 6 feet apart from others, plus other guidelines from the CDC. Those signs will be placed at registers, on front doors, and in many places throughout the store, including the deli and pharmacy.
- Many retailers will have tape on the floors at each register so customers understand the 6-foot distance they should keep from others. The length of a standard shopping cart creates natural spacing for "Social Distancing"

- Many stores will require customers who use reusable bags to bag their own groceries. Remind customers to wash reusable bags and totes after each use and to store bags and totes in a clean, cool and dry location.
- Store associates are wiping down and disinfecting shopping cart handles as often as needed throughout the day.

All of this said, it is with great respect and cooperation that our industry is reaching out to our legislative partners for help and leadership. The public—your constituency—depends on great leadership in stable times as well as in unprecedented times such as these. Clear direction from our elected officials is paramount in order to keep New York citizens informed.

We are respectfully pleading for your leadership in providing clear, concise, educational public service messaging on the importance and obligation of all individuals across the state to take action now with social distancing. Messages should facilitate understanding and a sense of urgency that is consistent with current guidance from [CDC](#), [WHO](#), and other respected regulatory resources across the nation.

As you know, our industry, as well as many others across the nation, is in the midst of turbulence, the likes of which we have never seen at any other time in history. Historically, in times of great national crisis— and even at the state level—one constant has prevailed: the elevation of sound, solid leadership and voice of reason.

As we continue to strive to keep our doors open for our guests, the lines of communication from our public servant leadership to the public is critical. We are all in this together!

Respectfully submitted,



Michael P. Durant
President and CEO