



The Office of Governor Christopher Sununu
Via electronic delivery only

April 20, 2020

Dear Governor Sununu:

On Friday, April 17, the New Hampshire Municipal Association's Board of Directors voted unanimously to request that you extend Emergency Order #27, restricting the operation of hotels and other lodging providers, to include public and private campgrounds. In a period when municipalities are facing many unprecedented challenges, the opening of campgrounds in the state has been the single biggest concern we have heard about from cities and towns in the last two weeks; the issue also has dominated the biweekly legal conference calls run by the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Campgrounds are inherently social gathering spots, more so than most hotels, with shared facilities like restrooms and showers, and they frequently attract people from urban areas outside New Hampshire to small towns, swelling their populations. The police chief in South Hampton has stated that his town's population will triple when the campgrounds open. The town of Albany, population 738, has seven campgrounds. Because campers tend to stay for longer periods than hotel guests, they often shop at local grocery and convenience stores, pharmacies, and other establishments, coming into contact with many local residents.

All of this puts New Hampshire residents at significantly increased risk of contracting COVID-19. This will, in turn, put local first responders and medical personnel at greater risk than they already are. Further, most regions of the state do not have medical facilities that are able to handle a surge in COVID-19 cases.

Some campgrounds are already opening, and many more will open soon if permitted. As you have stated, it will be at least several weeks before the state can begin returning to business as usual. An influx of out-of-state visitors could easily cause a new spike in COVID-19 cases, requiring a new round of stay-at-home orders. It seems it would be easier to close campgrounds now than to allow them to open and then order them closed at the peak of the season.

On behalf of all our members, NHMA urges you to take prompt action to prevent the opening of campgrounds in the state. We also thank you for everything you have done so far to address the needs of municipalities under very difficult circumstances. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or would like to discuss this issue.

N E W H A M P S H I R E M U N I C I P A L A S S O C I A T I O N

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Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margaret M.L. Byrnes". The signature is written in black ink and includes a horizontal flourish at the end.

Margaret M.L. Byrnes
Executive Director