



**National
Waste & Recycling
Association**SM

Collect. Recycle. Innovate.

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December 21, 2020

Hon. Dr. Robert Redfield, Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
1600 Clifton Road, NE
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr. Redfield,

The National Waste & Recycling Association (NWRA) is the voice in the nation's capital for the private-sector waste and recycling industry that is essential to preventing the spread of disease and illness as well as maintaining the quality of American life. The delivery of waste and recycling services impacts all healthcare, residential, commercial, and industrial properties on a daily basis.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has recommended essential workers should receive a COVID 19 vaccine after health care workers as part of the subsequent distribution. NWRA requests that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as part of the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) that will be issued on distribution of the COVID 19 vaccine, issue guidance to include the waste and recycling industry as part of Phase 1b vaccine distribution as essential frontline employees. During this national emergency, NWRA members have been classified by the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) as "essential" and are listed under five different "Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers" headings in the CISA 3.1 guidelines - "Public Works and Infrastructure Support Services," "Critical Manufacturing," "Hazardous Materials," "Healthcare/ Public Health," and "Transportation and Logistics." The waste and recycling industry provides a critical service essential for society to function. Coronavirus outbreaks in the solid waste workforce of Baltimore¹² and Philadelphia³ have resulted in delayed pick up of solid waste resulting in piles of waste on sidewalks raising the potential for a wider public health crisis and our nation does not need a waste crisis.

The private-sector waste and recycling industry has remained on the job during this crisis. Our members and their hard working front line employees have prevented devastating waste pile-ups in the cities and states around the country that would have led to an increase in disease. Our industry is made-up of heroes that were not afraid to remain at their post. We simply ask now that we be protected as soon as possible while we continue to do our vital work.

The solid waste industry directly employs nearly 450,000 people as of mid-2020. It is estimated that the private sector waste and recycling industry accounts for over one million jobs. Association members operate in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and can be found in most, if not all, U.S. congressional districts. Waste and recycling facilities number nearly 18,000 scattered throughout the U.S., mirroring population centers.

¹ <https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/bs-md-ci-recycling-service-suspension-20200611-744kmq75rnbrdk4pthej3lhki-story.html>

² <https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/bs-md-baltimore-looking-to-fill-gaps-in-trash-collections-20200615-hh5i2riezfw7nqz4uq2fxfe-story.html>

³ <https://6abc.com/philly-trash-philadelphia-streets-department-covid19/6281913/>

Thank you for taking the time to review our request. Please contact Kirk Sander at 202-364-3750 or ksander@wasterecycling.org to discuss this issue or if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darrell K. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light grey rectangular background behind it.

Darrell K. Smith, PhD
President and CEO