



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Governor's Office Receives Over 1,100 Safety Pledges from Construction Workers**

### *Residential Construction Supports Jobsite Safety Standards*

**Olympia, WA** Over the last three days, more than 1,100 members of the residential construction industry have sent Gov. Jay Inslee a written pledge to comply with the [jobsite safety standards](#) recommended by the governor's appointed working group.

The Building Industry Association of Washington said today the pledges demonstrate that construction can resume in Washington, while ensuring that employees and the public are protected from COVID19. BIAW members are committed to complying with the recommendations of the governor's working group, which cover everything from personal protective equipment to sanitation to education on construction sites.

"As a member of the governor's working group, BIAW strongly supports the unanimous recommendations made to him to restart construction safely as part of a Phase 1 proposal," said BIAW President Sherry Schwab. "These proposed safety requirements go above and beyond what the governor is currently requiring of publicly funded construction projects that were exempted from his stay-at-home order issued on March 25<sup>th</sup>."

Since the governor shut down residential construction in Washington as non-essential, Washington's economy has lost \$23 million a day in family wages. The total in lost wages will reach nearly \$1 billion if the governor keeps residential construction shut down until his order expires on May 4.

"The governor has allowed projects for low-income housing to proceed," continued Schwab, "but that construction process is the same as market-rate housing. Both can be performed safely. The only difference is who is paying.

"We've heard from homeowners whose homes are nearly complete, who have children on the way, who are financially strapped paying for a mortgage and extra rent while their home is in limbo. Do these people not matter merely because they are privately funded?" asked Schwab.

Forty-five other states and the federal government consider residential construction essential. Gov. Inslee recently agreed to participate in a "Western State's Pact" with California and Oregon, both of which deemed residential construction essential, as has the border state of Idaho. Yet Washington's governor has determined new housing is non-essential here.

“We are very interested as to how the governor determined that low-income housing construction has a lower COVID-19 exposure rate than other residential construction. To date, we are unable to locate anywhere nationally where residential construction is associated with COVID-19 spread or was a hot spot,” concluded Schwab. “Housing is essential and should be treated equally. And the pledges we’ve made to the governor show we are committed to keeping our workers and jobsites safe.”

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*The Building Industry Association of Washington is the voice of the housing industry as the state’s largest trade association with nearly 8,000-member companies employing approximately 265,000 people. The association is dedicated to ensuring and enhancing the vitality of the building industry for the benefit of its members and the housing needs of the citizens. Learn more at: [www.biaw.com](http://www.biaw.com)*

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