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NEWS RELEASE

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Building supply industry must be deemed essential service *Businesses are vital to communities across Canada*

WINNIPEG, MB – The Western Retail Lumber Association (WRLA) is urging the federal and provincial governments to identify the building supply industry as an essential service and allow these fundamental businesses to remain operational during the COVID-19 crisis. This includes hardware stores, construction sites, manufacturing businesses and lumber mills.

“The building supply industry is part of the fabric of Canada. Our members play a vital role in their communities, from providing jobs to over 262,000 Canadians to producing and supplying materials that are a necessity to the construction sector and essential to all Canadians,” says Liz Kovach, president of WRLA. “If these businesses have to close, it will come with an extreme loss for many small and medium enterprises, their employees, and everyone who relies on them to build, repair and live in their homes, buildings and communities.”

In many communities, the local hardware or building supply store represents the only outlet where consumers have access to necessary supplies for cleaning, disinfecting, maintaining and repairing their residences. The industry has provided essential supplies and support in past emergency situations, such as storms, floods and fires, and are ready to step up and continue to support our communities during this time.

The industry is committed to following recommendations from Health Canada and regional authorities, and have established new business practices, including social distancing, sterilizing procedures and curbside pickup.

“Our members are steadfast to doing what is best for their employees and customers, and we are confident that they can remain open while still keeping people safe and employed during this crisis,” says Kovach.

The WRLA and its members have been actively writing to their local governments and are adding their voice to the Canadian Construction Association to keep these necessary services operational. It is imperative to the Canadian economy that construction sites and the associated manufacturing businesses be allowed to remain in operation while taking the appropriate health and safety precautions.

WRLA represents 1,200 member firms in the building supply industry across Western Canada, including hardware stores, manufacturers, suppliers and lumberyards.

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CONNECTING THE BUILDING SUPPLY INDUSTRY