Commissioner Caswell and Members of the Governor's Economic Re-Opening Task Force:

Thank you for the opportunity to present to the Task Force. The New Hampshire Campground Owners’ Association represents 125 New Hampshire campgrounds. Collectively, their impact on the state’s economy extends well beyond the more than 15,000 campsites provided for the enjoyment of individuals or families. The camping industry in New Hampshire annually generates over $450 million in economic activity to our state, over $25 million in state tax revenues, and over $11 million in local property taxes.

Members appreciate that you recognize camping and being in the outdoors as one of the safest activities that one could participate in during this stressful time. Campers using their own RV or tenting equipment offers a security because they do not need to rely on other individuals to clean or sanitize their RV or tent. A campsite essentially provides space for those without a private outdoor area to social distance in the fresh air. Studies report that camping and spending family time in the outdoors is beneficial to health and well-being.

Although the physical and operational aspects of private campgrounds vary greatly, there are a number of protocols that our members are practicing to combat the pandemic. We understand the concern that camping may bring out-of-state citizens to our communities, but the reality is that they already work, live and shop here every day. Owners have reported they are encouraging campers to bring the provisions they will need to enjoy their time around the campfire and minimize potential interaction within the community. The goal is to institute proper protocols, so that we play a part in stopping the transmission of the virus.

Eighty seven percent of the membership are family owned businesses in which the vast majority live at the campground. They are proud of their properties and feel fortunate to share the outdoor environment with those that choose to incorporate camping into their lifestyles. While they are keeping the health and welfare of campers in the forefront of their minds, our members must consider the economics of the day. The majority of owners operate with the challenge to complete their annual revenue in just 22 weeks. They have acknowledged that the season has already had numerous cancellations and revenue is down drastically. Coupled with the loss of our ability to hold the March 2020 Camping & RV Show, they must now get creative to find funds for advertising to promote themselves and our beautiful state.

On a national scale, the campground industry has been in frequent communication for close to two months regarding the safety measures and preventive actions that should be implemented when open. Our board of directors using CDC guidelines and with input from owners, industry leaders and insurance companies have compiled a plan to move forward.
Thank you, members of the Governor’s Economic Re-Opening Task Force, for the opportunity to provide input today. We appreciate the tireless efforts put forth by this committee to safeguard all citizens. Please know that the New Hampshire Campground Owners’ Association stands ready to assist you in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Sprince  
Executive Director  
New Hampshire Campground Owners’ Association
Phase 1 – Campgrounds
(have been opening under EXHIBIT A to Emergency Order #17 with restrictions)

- Identify areas that will require frequent cleaning and sanitizing and the policy to accomplish cleaning and sanitizing.
- Help educate employees and customers on the importance of social distancing. Options include signs, correspondence prior to arrival and during their stay.
- Use PSA’s, website, marketing, signage as applicable to inform guests of new policies or procedures.
- Determine if protocols are needed and if so how to implement them for any at risk employees.

Employees

- Campgrounds can identify their person-in-charge and that this person is aware of the campgrounds revised policy and procedures.
- Advise employees if they become ill or present signs of illness, they should follow the business’s employee policy.
- Provide guidance to employees on social distancing and the proper use of face covering or PPE.
- Train all employees on the importance of frequent hand washing, the use of hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol content, and give them instruction to avoid touching hands to face.
- Limit the number of employees allowed simultaneously in break rooms.
Reservations & Check-ins

• When taking reservations, advise the person making the reservation that if anyone in their party is feeling sick or if anyone may have been exposed to the virus, they are to stay home.
• When checking campers in, aim to minimize contact. If practical, perform check-in curbside, have the campers pay in advance, pay by credit card, use plastic gloves, and promote social distancing protocols.
• Evaluate the suitability of physical barriers, sneeze guards, and service windows to promote social distancing protocols.
• Provide hand sanitizing options for employees and customers.
• When checking campers in, advise campers of social distancing protocols and of limited and/or closed activities and facilities. Recommend digital check in where possible.

Visitors

• Recommend visitors be limited to registered guests. Campgrounds have state guidelines and the ability to limit guests.

216-i:5 Registration. – All persons upon entering a recreational campground or camping park shall register with the appropriate authorities. All recreational campground or camping park owners or operators or their agents shall upon the registration of each camper or camper’s guest cause an entry to be made on a registration book or card system which shall record the campers’ or camper’s guests’ agreed-upon departure time and date. No camper or camper’s guest shall, without the consent of the campground or camping park owner or operator or his agent, remain on a campsite beyond the departure time and date so recorded at registration.
Campsite Occupancy

- Campsite occupancy is determined by each campground as campsite size varies. If a campground cannot support social distancing protocols per CDC guidelines, the campground should consider alternating campsites.

216-I:2 Density Requirement. – A minimum of 600 square feet shall be provided for each tent site and a minimum of 1,000 square feet shall be provided for each recreational vehicle and recreational camping cabin campsite, with or without connections to an approved sewage disposal system.

NOTE: Our member campgrounds on average (based on a recent survey) provide sites greater than 2,000 square feet.

Shower/Toilet Facilities

- Shower/toilet facilities may warrant a limited use schedule, a reduction in the quantity of facilities available or even closure (should relief from 216-I:4 be provided) to promote social distancing and/or cleaning per CDC recommendations. Since RV’s have their own bathrooms, limited facilities will have no effect on tent campers.

216-I:4 Disposal System. – III. Flush toilets or other approved toilet facilities, such as self-composting toilets or incinerating toilets, shall be provided in all recreational campgrounds or camping parks.
Campsite Cleaning

- Each campsite shall be cleaned between each new reservation. This may include applying a sanitizing solution as recommended by CDC guidelines to campsite utility hookups and picnic tables at the campsite as appropriate.

Laundry Rooms

- Limit access to laundry rooms to support safe distancing guidelines and to increase frequency of sanitizing common touch points as suggested by CDC guidelines.
Propane & Campfire Wood

- If practical, take orders for propane and wood at check-in and over the phone and encourage campers to pay with their credit card. Have campers leave their marked propane tanks near the filling area and deliver both propane and wood to individual sites.

Campground Stores

- Change store procedures to support social distancing and CDC cleaning recommendations for staff and guests or if unable, close the store.
- Face coverings and gloves should be available to staff.
- For delivery service, take orders for store items at check-in or over the phone and encourage campers to pay with their credit card. Offer take-out or delivery to individual sites.
Campground Activities

- Campground activities should be canceled unless the campground can support social distancing protocols and that any area used is cleaned after each use per CDC guidelines.

Public Gathering Areas

- Close Playgrounds that would not allow for social distancing or sanitizing per CDC guidelines.
- Close any public gathering areas such as pavilions that would not allow for social distancing or sanitizing per CDC guidelines.
- Close any pool (indoor or outdoor) that would not allow for social distancing or sanitizing per CDC guidelines.
Phase 2 - Target date
Memorial Day Weekend

- Continue Phase 1 recommendations
- Rental units (Cabins, Yurts, Trailers, Etc.) resume with enhanced sanitation regimens. Hard surfaces sanitized, enhanced sanitation strategies after every rental use per CDC guidelines.

Phase 3 – Target date TBD

- Restaurants - open restaurants on the same schedule as NHLRA
- Public gathering areas previously closed due to social distancing or sanitizing limitations could reopen with increased cleaning frequency as recommended by the CDC at such time.
- Events activities previously closed due to social distancing or sanitizing limitations could reopen with increased cleaning frequency as recommended by the CDC at such time.
- Open Pool or Water Structures in accordance with Public Health Guidelines.
Phase 4 – Unrestricted Level

• Continue education and support materials for guests regarding best practices.
• Continue with on-going sanitation training and education for staff.
• Continue partnerships with Industry Leaders, NHLRA, ARVC (National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds), and NCA (Northeast Campground Association) to ensure education and access to vital sanitation supplies.
• Outreach to the public with continued focus on enjoying camping and the outdoors.

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