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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LIVE CROP IN JEOPARDY

MANITOBA NURSERY LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION SEEKS CLARITY ON ESSENTIAL SERVICES



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The Manitoba Nursery Landscape Association, MBNLA, is a provincial non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the interests of horticulture and landscape professionals and upholding the highest standards of the nursery and landscape industry.

MBNLA is requesting clarity on whether greenhouse growers, nursery operators and retail garden centers are going to be granted essential service status by the province of Manitoba. Some sectors of our member businesses are clearly identified in this order such as; construction, lawn care and arboriculture. What is not entirely clear to our members is where the greenhouse, nursery and retail garden center sectors fall within this order.

For the association's growers, greenhouses, retail operators, the spring season is the most critical time of the entire year. Thousands of trucks ship the bulk of the year's orders to customers across the province during this small window. It is a make or break time. For most wholesale growers, the local Manitoba market is key, and with no destination for their perishable product, which is already in live production, the business losses would be devastating. Chad Labbe Vice President of Shelmerdine's Garden Centre revealed the following "our crop on the bench" dollar figure is just shy of 1 million dollars and if we were forced to stay closed to the public until June 15, we will experience a 75% loss in annual revenue"

Therefore, the survival of retail nursery operations and the continuing employment of their workers depends on these businesses being allowed to continue operating during this crisis. We ask that home supply and hardware stores, including nursery garden centers and big-box stores, fall within the retail exemption for any future mandated closures. Food security, support of the value chain, health benefits and the therapeutic nature of plants point to an industry that will be sadly needed, but highly valued during these difficult times.

Nonetheless, it is important to our members and the profession in which they are engaged that they are acting within the legal bounds of the order that has been issued emphasizing the need for greater clarity. Furthermore, they are an important component of the Manitoba Economy.

The 2018 MANITOBA ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTION conducted by the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics (MBS) estimates current Manitoba horticultural production to include about **5,000** acres of fruit and vegetables, **2,900** acres of sod, **1,600** acres of other nursery products, (9,500 total acres of field horticulture) and **3.18 million square feet of greenhouses**.

The total impact to Manitoba GDP at market prices is estimated at **\$80 million** per year. This is the net monetary impact to the provincial economy. For each \$1.00 in operating expenditures the GDP impact is estimated at \$1.00, while for each \$1.00 in output the GDP impact is \$0.80. The total impact to Manitoba labour income (which is included in the above GDP figure) is estimated at **\$50 million** per year.

Allowing these businesses to operate effectively at this time of year is their only chance for survival.

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