



February 16, 2021

Interim Secretary Karen Timberlake
Department of Health Services
1 West Wilson Street
Madison, WI 53703

On behalf of the American Public Works Association, Wisconsin Chapter (APWA-WI), we would first like to thank you for your tireless efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. We cannot express enough gratitude.

Today we are contacting you to ask that you add Public Works professionals to the next priority group for vaccine distribution. The committed men and women in public works perform many of the critical responsibilities fundamental to public health and safety. They operate and maintain critical infrastructure services including transportation, solid waste and refuse disposal systems, provide a clean and safe water supply, maintain safe and clean public buildings, spaces and facilities, and assist with logistical efforts in setting up COVID-19 testing sites. These jobs are not only critical to the continuity of protecting the lives of all Americans, but many are at a heightened risk of contracting COVID-19 because they come into daily contact with the public.

As you may know, the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) reiterated the importance of public works during the COVID-19 pandemic through the release of its recommended "Essential Critical Infrastructure Industries" guidelines. Furthermore, CISA has identified these functions as operations that are so vital that state and local governments should strive to maintain normal operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive Number 8 (HSPD-8) from 2003 identifies public works professionals as first responders on an even footing with police and fire services. While police and fire were included when DHS authorized first responders to obtain vaccinations, public works was omitted from this list.

APWA does respectfully request that the next, or subsequent targeted high-risk group recommended by the CDC for inoculation include public works professionals among essential workers. If you have any questions, or would like to discuss this further, please contact me at bob.givens@westwoodps.com or 920-830-6171.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Givens, PE
President APWA-WI