



For immediate release

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BUSINESS GROUPS ENCOURAGE CUSTOMERS ACROSS MAINE TO BE KIND
Public awareness campaign around “doing business differently” to begin today!

MAINE (June 25, 2020)—Retailers, grocers, food producers and other businesses across Maine are asking the public to practice kindness and respect toward workers and each other as shops, restaurants and other locations continue reopening following the unprecedented shutdown caused by COVID-19.

The Retail Association of Maine, Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce and Maine Grocers and Food Producers Association came together to develop the statewide campaign based on their observations of consumer behavior at essential businesses throughout the pandemic and as businesses began to reopen. They noticed that many customers were coming in to businesses, ignoring mask-wearing requirements and sometimes harassing store employees who attempted to enforce the rules put in place according to Maine CDC guidelines and the governor’s executive orders.

The “**Let’s Be Kind**” statewide campaign will kick off today with a social media campaign along with posters in businesses and on July 6 public service announcements will begin airing on television stations across the state. The campaign’s tagline—*Doing Business Differently Helps Keep Maine Safe*—is intended to reinforce the importance of making simple adjustments to everyone’s daily shopping and dining habits in order to protect workers and each other.

“We realize this unprecedented pandemic and stay at home order has been taxing on everyone, and people are anxious to get back to their lives as usual,” said **Curtis Picard, President and CEO of the Retail Association of Maine**. “At the same time, practices are changing as retailers and other businesses work to comply with state guidelines and ensure that their employees—including those

front-line workers who interact with the public every day—are able to stay as healthy and safe as possible. It’s essential to keeping businesses open and the economy getting back on track.”

Christine Cummings, Executive Director of the Maine Grocers and Food Producers Association, noted, “Front-line employees have been essential to keeping our member businesses open and running throughout the pandemic. We owe them a debt of gratitude, not harassment, when they ask customers to follow guidelines such as wearing a face covering and maintaining safe social distancing—they are working to keep us all safe.”

“We are asking the public to plan ahead; take precautions such as wearing a mask, washing hands and using hand sanitizer; and, above all, respect everyone,” said **Quincy Hentzel, CEO of the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce.** “We are all in this together, and if we all take these simple steps and treat each other with a little extra kindness and patience, we can emerge from this pandemic stronger.”

To get the “Let’s Be Kind” tool kit, please visit the websites of the organizations listed below.

About the Maine Grocers & Food Producers Association

The Maine Grocers & Food Producers Association is a business trade association representing main street businesses: independently owned and operated grocery stores, supermarkets, food and beverage producers and processors, wholesalers and distributors and allied service companies. We are a community dedicated to the prosperity of Maine’s grocery and food producer industry through excellence in advocacy, networking and education. For more information on the Maine Grocers & Food Producers Association please visit mgfpa.org or call 207-622-4461.

About the Retail Association of Maine

The Retail Association of Maine is a statewide, non-profit trade association representing more than 350 businesses in the state, from large chains to small independent retailers. Incorporated in 1937, the Retail Association of Maine serves as the voice of retailers in Maine and concentrates on preserving the state’s strong retail climate. For more information on the Retail Association of Maine, please visit the website at retailmaine.org or call the Retail Association of Maine offices at 207-623-1149.

About the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce

Our organization represents 8 communities within the Greater Portland region - Cape Elizabeth, Cumberland, Falmouth, Gorham, Portland, Scarborough, South Portland and Westbrook – as well as PROPEL, our young professionals’ group. We are comprised of over 1300 organizations which represent over 65,000 employees. Through our staff’s work, our volunteer boards, and strategic partnerships throughout the region, we encourage individual, community and business growth by offering valuable networking, advocacy, and educational opportunities. For more information please visit [Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce](http://PortlandRegionalChamberofCommerce.org).