



Construction trade unions take different approaches to keeping workers safe during pandemic, ConstructionDive, ft. Andrew Richards

Andrew Richards, co-managing partner of the KD Long Island Office and chair of Construction Law practice group was quoted in an article written by Kim Slowey, published by ConstructionDive on April 13, 2020

Once it was obvious that the coronavirus outbreak had become a major threat in the United States, local and state governments began shutting down businesses they deemed nonessential. But even then, most construction work was considered essential in many areas of the country.

In New York, for example, construction projects remained open on a limited basis under Gov. Andrew Cuomo's PAUSE executive order signed March 20. But later that month, the administration clarified that only specific essential and emergency construction services could move forward.

Trade unions were instrumental in persuading the New York state government to shut down projects that were previously allowed to continue. "Trade unions definitely took a stand," said Andrew Richards, attorney and chair of the construction practice group at Kaufman Dolowich Voluck LLP in New York City.

Union members were fearful of being exposed to the novel coronavirus and some workers reportedly had become sick while working on certain jobsites. A considerable amount of pressure from trade unions, as well as New York City lawmakers, was brought to bear on the governor, Richards said.

While many union representatives were in favor of keeping the construction industry moving forward at first, there was a shift in opinion once serious questions were raised about how safe workers were while trying to do their jobs.