CEMA issued the following press release on 10/28/2020:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The California Entertainment Machine Association opposes state’s arbitrary shutdown of its businesses, explores litigation

BREA, Calif.—October 28, 2020— The California Entertainment Machine Association (CEMA), a trade association representing owners of jukeboxes, pinball machines, arcade games and other currency-operated devices, announced today that it is exploring legal action challenging Gov. Gavin Newsom’s administration over coronavirus restraints that ban the public from using the devices in bars, restaurants and other public venues.

CEMA characterizes the state’s restrictions on the operation of its members’ equipment as “arbitrary and capricious.” The association points out:

• Many kiosks, another type of unattended device, are permitted to operate in the state while amusement machines have been forced to shut down.

• Wineries and vineyards are allowed to operate while breweries and bars have been forced to remain closed.

• The state’s family entertainment centers (FECs), which offer arcade games and other attractions, are in danger of permanent closures.

Statewide, the majority of kiosks, including those run by the California Lottery, continue to operate during the pandemic. In another example of the state’s inconsistent treatment of businesses, Redbox self-service entertainment rental and sales kiosks are permitted to operate. Lottery and Redbox kiosks, among others offering nonessential services, are permitted to operate while amusement and entertainment kiosks such as skill cranes, video games, jukeboxes are not. Furthermore, lottery and Redbox kiosks are often placed side-by-side with amusement and entertainment kiosks in retail locations, CEMA observed.

“CEMA members take all appropriate Covid-compliant safety measures and follow the Best Practices outlined by the Amusement and Music Operators Association, our Chicago-based national association, to provide a safe experience for our customers,” said CEMA president Jim Wyatt.

CEMA also takes exception to the state’s arbitrary treatment toward bars and breweries, noting that they are equally capable of following the same protocols that allow restaurants and wineries to operate. Bars and breweries are vital parts to local communities; the small businesspeople who run them must be allowed to continue to operate in the same manner in which restaurants and wineries do.

“Restaurants are permitted to open with limited occupancy while bars are not permitted to open under similar arrangement — and that is a completely capricious distinction.” Wyatt said.

It should be noted that FECs are able to follow all the same procedures as restaurants, and they are capable and ready to implement additional safety measures. These include turning off every other machine, rearranging floorplans to promote physical distancing and limiting attendance. Because many FECs are anchored to other businesses – shopping malls, pizzerias, family restaurants, skating rinks and bowling centers, etc. – and are not owned by the host sites, they will shutter permanently if steps to reopen them are not adopted swiftly.

“CEMA wants to underscore with categorical confidence that amusement and music equipment, along with family entertainment centers, are not a public safety risk during the Covid pandemic,” Wyatt said.

The CEMA board of directors is consulting with several law firms to explore forming an alliance with similarly situated industries and trade associations to pursue any measures available to preserve the livelihoods of its members and myriad small businesses they serve.

ABOUT CEMA: The California Entertainment Machine Association was established in 2013 to promote, preserve and protect the interests of owners and operators of amusements, music and other currency-activated equipment, as well as their suppliers and other constituents, in the state of California. CEMA is online at thecema.org and based at 2500 East Imperial Highway, Suite 147A-237, Brea, CA 92821.