



Businesses are ready to restart our economy, keep us safe

June 9,
2020

Dear Governor
Walz:

Small businesses are the economic fuel of our state's future. Nearly half of Minnesotans own or work for a small business and create two out of every three new jobs each year. On behalf of hundreds of thousands of small businesses and more than 50 local chambers of commerce and trade associations across Minnesota, we urge you to open all businesses which have been sidelined since March 16.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the business community has shared the responsibility of balancing the need for public health protections and economic impacts. Businesses which have remained open throughout this crisis have taken necessary steps to protect employee and customer health. *Small businesses across our state have done the same and are ready to fully re-open now.* Without decisive action many will be lost. This is not simply a personal loss for business owners. This is a loss to the thousands of workers, their communities, the local governments and the state in terms of commercial and economic activity.

DEED Commissioner Grove has acknowledged that small businesses have borne a disproportionate amount of the economic burden. April employment statistics released by DEED show that compared to the same month last year, employment is down 73% in full-service restaurants, 63% in personal and laundry services, and 61% in arts, recreation and entertainment. SBA statistics reveal that these industries have among the highest shares of small business employment in our state's economy. What's more, these workers have been furloughed and are collecting from an unemployment account which is projected to face a deficit by the end of June.

We ask you to recognize these businesses are ready. They are ready to return and have designed plans to safely return their workers and protect their customers. They are making incremental progress by being open at a small percentage of their total capacity, but that will not sustain any long-term success. They should be allowed to fully reopen no later than June 19.

Other states in our region have offered clear guidance and dates for moving ahead with re-opening or have already opened:

- Indiana's "Back on Track Indiana" plan has clear timelines if positive health outcomes are sustained. For example, on June 14th, retail stores and malls can operate at full capacity; dining rooms at 75% capacity; bowling alleys and other smaller entertainment venues at 50% capacity. By July 4th, personal services, gyms, bars and restaurants are open at full capacity and gatherings of 250 people are allowed including sports venues, conventions, festivals and state fair. <https://backontrack.in.gov/2348.htm>
- "Re-open Kansas" allows all businesses to fully re-open with adherence to health safety guidelines after June 8th.
<https://covid.ks.gov/ad-astra-a-plan-to-reopen-kansas/>
- Iowa re-opened small retail boutiques, personal services, fitness facilities, entertainment venues and establishments serving alcohol (50% capacity limitation) in May.
- North Dakota small businesses including breweries, bars, restaurants, personal care services, retail and smaller entertainment venues have been open since May 1st.
- Wisconsin small businesses have been open (if not prohibited by local health orders) since May 13th.

As business organizations, we stand ready to help ensure our members are prepared to open – that they have instituted health and safety protocols for their workers and customers and have a preparedness plan in place. We are confident in their ability to do the right thing and are working with them, each and every day to understand and employ best practices.

It's time to get Minnesota moving again, in the safest way possible for employees and customers, while protecting businesses of all sizes. Minnesota's long-term economic future is counting on it.

MINNEAPOLIS READY COALITION IN SUPPORT OF SAFELY OPENING SMALL BUSINESSES

Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber of
Commerce Anoka Area Chamber of
Commerce Apple Valley Chamber of

Commerce Austin Area Chamber of
Commerce Belle Plaine Chamber of
Commerce Bemidji Area Chamber of
Commerce Big Lake Chamber of

Commerce & Industry Brainerd Lakes Area
Chamber of Commerce Buffalo Area
Chamber of Commerce Burnsville
Chamber of Commerce Cannon Falls Area
Chamber of Commerce Cold Spring Area
Chamber of Commerce Dakota County
Regional Chamber of Commerce Delano
Area Chamber of Commerce Duluth Area
Chamber of Commerce Eden Prairie
Chamber of Commerce Elk River Area
Chamber of Commerce Fairmont Area
Chamber of Commerce Fergus Falls Area
Chamber of Commerce Forest Lake Area
Chamber of Commerce Glenwood Lakes
Area Chamber of Commerce Greater
Mankato Growth, Inc. Greater Stillwater
Chamber of Commerce Ham Lake Area
Chamber of Commerce Hermantown Area
Chamber of Commerce Iron Mining
Association La Crescent Chamber of
Commerce Lanesboro Area Chamber of
Commerce Laurentian Chamber of
Commerce Leech Lake Area Chamber of
Commerce Lonsdale Area Chamber of
Commerce
Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce
Melrose Area Chamber of Commerce
MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce

Minnesota Beverage Association
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
Minnesota Recruiting and Staffing
Association Minnesota Trucking
Association Minnesota Utility Contractors
Association Northfield Area Chamber of
Commerce & Tourism Owatonna Area
Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Park
Rapids Lakes Area Chamber of
Commerce Pipestone Area Chamber of
Commerce & CVB River Heights Chamber
of Commerce Sauk Centre Area Chamber
of Commerce Savage Chamber of
Commerce Shakopee Chamber & Visitors
Bureau SouthWest Metro Chamber of
Commerce St. Cloud Area Chamber of
Commerce The Chamber Grand Forks &
East Grand Forks Thief River Falls
Chamber of Commerce TwinWest
Chamber of Commerce Wabasha Kellogg
Chamber of Commerce/CVB Waconia
Chamber of Commerce Waseca Area
Chamber of Commerce White Bear Area
Chamber of Commerce Willmar Lakes
Area Chamber of Commerce Winona Area
Chamber of Commerce Worthington Area
Chamber of Commerce

cc: Speaker Melissa Hortman, MN House of
Representatives

Representative Kurt Daudt, MN House of
Representatives Senator Paul Gazelka, MN Senate
Senator Susan Kent, MN Senate Commissioner
Steve Grove, MN DEED