

July 17, 2020

Dear Chairmen:

Thank you for your commitment to balancing the FY 2020 budget and coming to an agreement that supports our communities during this unprecedented time. While all of us can acknowledge that the threat of COVID-19 is still very much present in our communities, chambers and economic development organizations are focused on economic recovery. As we look ahead to the FY 2021 budget, our organizations urge the Administration and Legislature to lean on programs that have proven their worth and value – and the Going Pro Talent Fund is one of those programs.

The Going Pro Talent Fund is a highly effective program with a proven return on investment that has supported tens-of-thousands of workers across Michigan. This program provides job training grants to businesses to support training for high-demand, skilled trades industries. As our state grapples with one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation, we can take this opportunity to train our workforce to enter trades that will continue pushing us into the 21st-century job market and diversifying our economies.

In normal times, our business community struggles to find talent. We know that this will be an even more complex challenge during our recovery. We are appreciative of state investment in the Going Pro Talent Fund over the years and hope our decision-makers will see the value in maintaining this program as we all do our part to get Michiganders back to work. The Executive budget recommendation included the Going Pro Talent Fund at \$27.9M, and we encourage this investment as part of the state's comprehensive COVID-19 response.

Thank you for supporting our business community during this health and economic crisis. Your chambers and economic development organizations remain committed to the recovery of our respective regions and the entire state.

Sincerely,

Stacie Bytwork, Chairperson
Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance



Rick Baker, President & CEO
Grand Rapids Chamber



Tony Stamas, President & CEO
Midland Business Alliance



Ryan Tarrant, President & CEO
Bay Area Chamber of Commerce



Sandy K. Baruah, President & CEO
Detroit Regional Chamber



Ron Kitchens, CEO & Senior Partner

Southwest Michigan First



Veronica Horn, President & CEO
Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce



Tim Daman, President & CEO
Lansing Regional Chamber



Diane Keller, President & CEO
Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber



Adam Poll, President & CEO
Alpena Chamber of Commerce



Rick Coates, Executive Director
Benzie County Chamber of Commerce



Charlie Schwarz, Interim President
Cadillac Area Chamber of Commerce



Sarah Hagen, President
Charlevoix Area Chamber of Commerce



Paul Gunderson, Executive Director
Gaylord Area Chamber of Commerce



Amy Clickner, CEO
Lake Superior Community Partnership



Stacie Bytwork, President
Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce



Nikki Devitt, President
Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce



Warren Call, President & CEO
Traverse Connect



Scott A. Herceg, Executive Director
Cheboygan Area Chamber of Commerce



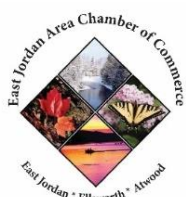
Bonnie P. Kulp, Executive Director
Harbor Springs Area Chamber of Commerce



Tony Haller, Executive Director
Sault Area Chamber of Commerce



Mary H. Faculak, CEO & President
East Jordan Area Chamber of Commerce



Kimberly Akin, Executive Director
Boyerne Area Chamber of Commerce



Renee Spalding, President
Leelanau Peninsula Chamber of Commerce



Tom Kern, Executive Director
Elk Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce

