

July 17, 2020

Dear Governor Whitmer:

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**



**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  
CADILLAC AREA  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
*Driving Business Forward*



**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



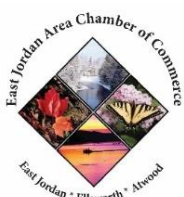
**Bonnie P. Kulp, Executive Director**  
Harbor Springs Area Chamber of Commerce



**Tony Haller, Executive Director**  
Sault Area Chamber of Commerce



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



**Kimberly Akin, Executive Director**  
Boyer Area Chamber of Commerce



**Renee Spalding, President**  
Leelanau Peninsula Chamber of Commerce



**Tom Kern, Executive Director**  
Elk Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce

