March 16, 2020

Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz:

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, small and medium-sized businesses across Minnesota are pulling together to protect our customers and employees and support our communities. We are uplifted by the support we are receiving from friends, neighbors, civic leaders and elected officials.

Our number one priority is the health and safety of our employees and customers – these are our family, friends and loved ones and we are all-in. We all have an important role to play in slowing the spread of COVID-19.

Small and medium-sized businesses from around the state, trade associations, and the Minneapolis Regional Chamber are working together to assemble resources for businesses that need support. This includes:

- Ensuring the immediate preservation of cashflow to support employee payroll
- Bringing together human resources support
- Helping identify legal support for small businesses
- Seeking out ways that Minnesota companies can use their supply chains to support Minnesota-based small and medium-sized businesses
- Compiling ways that Minnesotans can help support independent, local businesses by purchasing gift cards, purchasing food delivery or take out

We are calling this effort “Protect Your Hometown Business” and hope everyone will pull together to help ensure that the Minnesota businesses we love and appreciate make it through this difficult time.

The economic impact on small and medium-sized businesses in Minnesota, especially in the hospitality industry, will be significant. In order to help small and medium-sized businesses weather this crisis, including continuing to pay employees, we are requesting consideration of the following mitigation measures:
• Waive payment of February sales taxes, due on March 20; this would provide mission critical cashflow to small and medium-sized businesses to help them pay employees during this difficult time

• Waive payment of March sales taxes, due on April 20; sales will be down significantly this month, but this will provide some additional relief

• Waive the May 15 property tax payment – this will be a difficult payment for many small and medium-sized businesses

• Income replacement for independent contractors experiencing event cancellations and other contract disruptions

• Identify potential public policy options to support the insurance industry as they work with policyholders to keep their businesses viable.

• Regulatory support to protect insurance companies from denying COVID-19 claims due to fear of opening up significant exposures to similar claims in the future.

• Expanded Unemployment Insurance assistance for pandemic-impacted workers. Hourly workers will be struggling to pay the bills. Many employers are attempting to educate employees on their rights and benefits in such programs. The state should take measures to ensure this process is as easy as possible to access and funds are available promptly for employees that are furloughed or had their hours reduced due to COVID-19, such as;
  o Waive the week waiting requirement
  o Waive the requirement to be available for and seeking work
  o Do not count use of UI for pandemic-related reasons to count against an employer’s experience rating
  o Full, rather than partial, wage replacement
  o 26-week extension of benefits
  o Extend benefits those who may not be covered

We are asking Minnesota’s Executive and Legislative branches to explore the best ways to support businesses and employees – we are open to any and all ideas that will help business continuity through this time.

Thank you to the thousands of people who have reached out to assist businesses. We are your friends and neighbors. We are resilient and will get through this together.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Weinhagen
Minneapolis Regional Chamber

Wade Luneberg
UNITE HERE Local 17

Dayna Frank
First Avenue
Erik Forsberg
Devil’s Advocate & Dan Kelly’s Pub

Houston White
HWMR & Black Excellence

Maureen Scallen Failor
Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce

David Burley & Stephanie Shimp
Blue Plate Restaurants

Jeff Kaster
Bulldog & Gasthof’s

Jim Kruizenga
Broadway Pizza

JJ Haywood
Pizza Luce

Matt Perry
Southwest Business Association

Dan Collison
East Town Business Partnership

Jamie Schumacher
West Bank Business Association

Christine Levens
Northeast Minneapolis Chamber

Sam & Val Leon
Acapulco Restaurants

Brent Pavia
Bloomington Chamber

Jim Higgins
Higgins Insurance Agency

Jodi Lund
The Coffee Shop NE

Lynda MacDonald
Subway

Larry Ranallo
The Moose Bar & Grill

Bruce LaMere & Michael Therres
LCM Concrete & Masonry, Inc

Tom DeQuattro
Willy McCoys & McCoys Copper Pint

Adam Carver & Daniel Jacobson
Pixelwerx

Luke Shimp & Tracy Bachul
Red Cow & Red Rabbit Restaurants

John Warian
Press-Sure-Print

Evan Sallee
Fair State Brewing Cooperative

John Lacaria
Eastside Food Co-op

Mike and Tim Tuttle
Elsie’s, Tuttle’s, Memory Lanes, Splittrocks

Bill Kozlak
Jax Café

Tony Chesak
Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association

Lowell Pickett
The Dakota

Allison Sharkley
Lake Street Council
Julie Ingebretsen
Ingebretsen’s

Anna Bloomstand
Lilleknapen Inc.

Carlos Landreau
The Landreau Group

Brian Liebeck
Icehouse

Leia Simon
Baby’s on Broadway

Mark Bauler
Valley Images Photography

Arwyn Burch & Teresa Fox
Glam Dolls Donuts

Sameh Wadi
Saffron

Alisa Mulhair
Sonder

Michael Weinhagen
Weinhagen Tire & Auto Service

Jessica Roe
Roe Law Group

Dario Anselmo
Consortium Building

Jared Brewington
Thigh Times Birdhouse

Tadd Brindley
Grethen House

Kelly Carbonari
Montaggio, Inc.

Veronica Clark
D.NOLO Destination North Loop

Joe Clark
Cobble Operations

Marie Dwyer & Karl Benson
Cooks of Crocus Hill

Jill Skogheim
5-8 Club

Catherine Hall
The Hewing Hotel

Lisa Impagliazzo
North Loop Wine & Spirits

Scott Johnson
Jeromeo

Joanne Kaufman
Warehouse District Business Association

Peter Killen
Kieran’s, The Local & The Liffey

Brian Lang
Rocket Restaurant Group, The 508, The Loop

Tim Mahoney
Loon Café

Jessica Reipke & Charlie Brackney
Haus salon

John Rimarcik
Masters Restaurants, Monte Carlo, Runyon’s, Annie’s Parlor, Kitty Cat Klub, Pracna, Convention Grill, St. Anthony Main Theater
Steve Rettler  
Evermore Wedding Gown Care  
Gina Zaffrano  
Uptown Hair District

Maryam Selfi  
AC Hotel Minneapolis Downtown  
Daniel Farias  
Mi Boleto Travel

Jim Sheeley  
Historic Theatre Group  
Fabiola Gomez  
La Matraca News

Rona Sliwinski  
North Loop Neighborhood Association  
Courtney Remes  
Arrowplate

Board Member  
Kelly English  
Cheeriup

Dana Swindler  
Martin Patrick 3  
Tom Amel  
Overproof LLC

Jacob Toledo  
Empire Entertainment  
Shannon L. McWalters & Julie Noren  
Light Dark Landscape LLC

Pam Webben  
NOLO’s Kitchen & Bar  
Chris & Maria Guertin  
Sport Resource Group

The Basement Bar  
David & Mara Bernick  
Riverview Cafe and Winebar

Tiffany Zimmer  
Grand Hotel Minneapolis  
Heather Manley  
On-Demand Services Group & Crooked Water Spirits Distillery  
Assad Mohamad  
Hayat Restaurant

Blake Richardson  
Moto-i  
Lauren Bennett McGinty  
Minnesota Craft Brewers Association

Lamberto Vergara  
LV’s Barbershop  
Scott Mc Cleary  
Central Avenue Liquors

Patrick McDonough & Rebekah Cook  
Blue Door Pubs  
Patricia & Jim Grell  
GUS

Mike Smith  
Anderson Realty  
Adam & Andrew Sieve  
Hazel’s Northeast

James Brown  
Hi-Lo Diner  
Megan Boeson  
Knit & Bolt
Margo Ashmore  
Minneapolis & St. Paul Home Tour

Skye Rossi  
Rhymesayers Entertainment

Sen Yai Sen Lek / Dipped & Debris  
Joe & Holly Hatch-Surisook

Gavin Kaysen  
Soigne Hospitality Group  
Spoon & Stable, Bellecour, demi

Heidi Andermack & Amy Brown  
Cowgirls Killer Catering

Kristy Lynn Allen  
The Beez Kneez, LLC

Nicole Jennings  
Queen Anna House of Fasion

Mark Nerenhausen  
Hennepin Theatre Trust

Keyvan Talibi  
Kaskaid Hospitality

cc: Revenue Commissioner Cynthia Bauerly, House Speaker Melissa Hortman, Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka, House Minority Leader Kurt Daudt, Senate Minority Leader Susan Kent