



Businesses are ready to restart our economy, keep us safe

February 16, 2021

Dear Governor Walz and Minnesota's Legislative delegation,

On behalf of hundreds of thousands of businesses and 80 local chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, and trade associations across Minnesota, thank your efforts to reopen our economy.

Throughout the challenges presented by this public health emergency, the Minnesota Ready Coalition's goal has been to strike a balance between safeguarding health and protecting our economy. Businesses that were deemed essential developed detailed strategies to protect their workforce from the spread of COVID-19 while ensuring continuity of operations. Consumer-facing businesses that were closed or allowed to operate only at limited capacity have used this time to develop their own plans and procedures to reopen their doors and restart their operations in line with the requirements of this "new normal" safely and responsibly.

Employers want to provide safe and healthy workplaces for their employees and customers and get back to business.

As the number of positive cases decline, hospital capacity increases and more Minnesotans are vaccinated, it is time for a transparent plan to reopen our economy that Minnesota businesses, their employees and customers can rely on rather than an indefinite pause that suspends economic recovery. Many other states have done this. Detailed plans have been developed and include achieving certain health-based metrics, dates, or milestones in order to trigger reopens either on a regional, industry-specific, or statewide basis. This type of approach has been lacking here in Minnesota.

We appreciate the extent to which Senate File 1200 and House File 1336 attempts to accelerate the reopening of our economy. Whether it is through this legislation or other similar proposals, the Legislature and Walz Administration must develop a reopening strategy based on transparent metrics that allow for a responsible, phased reopening. As noted above, other states have done this; Minnesota must too.

We would further recommend that if the course of the virus or new variants require future restrictions on businesses to protect public health, a minimum 7–10-day notice must be provided to affected businesses to prevent loss of inventory, staffing notifications, and for operational planning. Businesses can no longer afford additional losses.

Thank you for your efforts to jump-start the process of reopening our economy. Minnesota employers have done their part to curb the spread of the virus and they will continue to do so. But they deserve to know what is in store for them, their employees, and their customers. Doing so is critical as we continue to navigate our way through this pandemic together and promote economic recovery. Any delay threatens to deepen Minnesota's economic downturn, harm employers and workers, and expand the cost to state government.

Thank you for your consideration.

MINNESOTA READY COALITION IN SUPPORT OF REOPENING MINNESOTA'S ECONOMY

Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce  
Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce  
Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce  
APEX  
Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Austin Area Chamber of Commerce  
Big Lake Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce  
Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce  
Burnsville Chamber of Commerce  
Cannon Falls Area Chamber of Commerce  
Cold Spring Area Chamber of Commerce  
Cottage Grove Area Chamber of Commerce  
Crookston Area Chamber & Visitors Bureau  
Crosslake Chamber of Commerce  
Cuyuna Lakes Chamber of Commerce  
Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Delano Area Chamber of Commerce  
Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce  
Elk River Area Chamber of Commerce  
Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce  
Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism  
Fergus Falls Area Chamber of Commerce  
Forest Lake Area Chamber of Commerce  
Glenwood Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce  
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce  
Granite Falls Area Chamber of Commerce & CVB  
Greater Mankato Growth, Inc.  
Greater Stillwater Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Wayzata Area Chamber of Commerce  
Hermantown Area Chamber of Commerce  
Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce  
Hospitality Minnesota  
Hutchinson Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism  
I94 West Chamber of Commerce  
Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce  
Lake County Chamber of Commerce  
Laurentian Chamber of Commerce  
Litchfield Area Chamber of Commerce  
Lonsdale Area Chamber of Commerce  
Madelia Area Chamber of Commerce  
Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce  
Melrose Area Chamber of Commerce  
MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce  
Minnesota Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus  
Minnesota Beverage Association  
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce  
Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association  
Minnesota Recruiting and Staffing Association  
Minnesota Retailers Association  
Minnesota Trucking Association  
Minnesota Utility Contractors Association  
New Prague Chamber of Commerce  
New Ulm Area Chamber of Commerce  
Nisswa Chamber of Commerce  
North 65 Chamber of Commerce  
Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism  
Pequot Lakes Chamber of Commerce  
Pipestone Area Chamber of Commerce & CVB  
Princeton Area Chamber of Commerce  
Redwood Area Chamber & Tourism  
River Heights Chamber of Commerce  
Sauk Centre Area Chamber of Commerce  
Shakopee Chamber & Visitors Bureau  
Sleepy Eye Area Chamber of Commerce  
SouthWest Metro Chamber of Commerce  
St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce  
St. James Area Chamber of Commerce  
The Chamber Grand Forks & East Grand Forks  
Tracy Area Chamber of Commerce  
Twin Cities North Chamber  
Waconia Chamber of Commerce  
Wahpeton Breckenridge Area Chamber of Commerce  
White Bear Area Chamber of Commerce  
Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce  
Winona Area Chamber of Commerce  
Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce