



October 16, 2020

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

Re: A request for partnership to support and help save Minnesota's restaurants/hospitality

Dear Governor Walz:

Greater Mankato Growth, the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Organization serving nearly 1,000 businesses in the Greater Mankato area, recently convened local restaurant owners and managers to productively gather feedback and recommendations for what is needed to help sustain their small businesses both at the State level and through our local work as they continue to navigate the uncertainty of this economic crisis, especially as we move towards late fall and winter.

We understand that this is an unprecedented time. However, in writing this letter, we ask for your partnership and action in creatively finding ways to support these critical businesses that are the backbone of our communities, while keeping safety at the top of mind. Time is of essence and without providing a lifeline to our restaurant/hospitality industry, survey data indicates that nearly 40% of businesses in this sector will not survive through the end of 2020. Our restaurant owners are in desperation.

Provided with this letter, you will find notes from our session with restaurants in the Greater Mankato area. Notes from the conversation were provided to Commissioner Grove and DEED staff in addition to being brought forward on restaurant/hospitality calls hosted by DEED. We feel it is essential to bring this feedback to your attention directly from our constituency. If the state is unable to make changes that allow restaurants to compete by bringing in enough revenue to remain open, financial relief in the form of tax relief and grant funding will be essential. Please note the following key action items based on direct points brought forward by restaurant owners in our community that correlate to the attached document.

- Making Restaurants Competitive:
 - Allow for greater capacity with social distancing, plexiglass, etc.
 - Support with staffing & paying staff wages
 - Allow for better use of event space
 - Marketing support for restaurants/promotion of restaurants as safe, not unsafe
 - Consistency with regulation enforcement across industries and jurisdictions



- Helping Restaurants Financially:
 - Sales tax forgiveness until capacity is returned to 100%
 - Licensing relief
 - Grant funding for emergencies/repairs
 - Grant funding to support online ordering/delivery/carryout
 - Grant funding for outdoor seating/outdoor heating
 - Grant funding for plexiglass/other safety measures

We appreciate your leadership as we navigate these difficult times and respectfully request your consideration of the urgency faced by our restaurant/hospitality industry. Please don't hesitate to contact me at jbeyer@greatermankato.com or 507-385-6645 if I can answer any questions or be of assistance with providing additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jessica Beyer". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jessica Beyer
President & CEO

cc: Greater Mankato Legislative Delegation
Commissioner Steve Grove – Department of Employment and Economic Development
Commissioner Jan Malcolm – Minnesota Department of Health