

## Minnesota Ready Coalition

### Talking Points

June 9, 2020

#### **On behalf of businesses throughout the state, the coalition asks Governor Walz to open all Minnesota businesses no later than June 19.**

- Businesses throughout Minnesota have eagerly awaited their turn to open.
- They have taken the necessary safety precautions – with detailed, effective preparedness plans in place.
- For those who are already serving customers safely, adding capacity would help cover costs of staff, supplies, or make it more economically viable to bring staff back.
- The coalition represents more than 50 business and industry organizations – tens of thousands of Minnesota businesses and employees in every corner of the state.

#### **Knowing that they could reopen or increase customer capacity on a certain date would help small businesses start to refuel our economy, and safely welcome back their employees and customers.**

- Advance notice on an open date will help them plan for changes in business practices on a timeline.
- This will allow them to transition employees back safely.
- This will also allow them to market their new practices to customers before they interact with them in person.

#### **Small businesses were disproportionately impacted by the stay-at-home order.**

- Small businesses are the economic fuel of our state's future. Nearly half of Minnesotans own or work for a small business and create two out of every three new jobs each year.
- April employment statistics released by DEED show that compared to the same month last year, employment is down 73% in full-service restaurants, 63% in personal and laundry services, and 61% in arts, recreation and entertainment. SBA statistics reveal that these industries have among the highest shares of small business employment in our state's economy.
- According to Open Table, dine-in activity (including patios) is still 70% behind where it was one year ago.
- Without decisive action, many will be lost. This is not simply a personal loss for business owners. This is a loss to the employees, their communities, the local governments and the state in terms of commercial and economic activity.

#### **FAQ:**

##### **Why June 19, specifically?**

- Businesses need date certainty. Much effort and expense goes into planning and greater lead times with assurance will help businesses secure financial success for their workers.
- June 19 is two weeks after the most recent step that the governor took to "turn the dial" in their phased plan. Two weeks is long enough to monitor health impacts as a result of that step.
- June 19 is also two weeks ahead of the July 4 holiday. This is a critical time for many businesses throughout the state.

##### **Who are you trying to help that hasn't already been allowed to open?**

- Minnesota's small businesses – from restaurants to retail – continue to operate at only a small portion of their total capacity, leaving workers waiting for a full return to employment.

### What have other states done?

- North Dakota, which borders Minnesota to the west is second only to Montana as the most open business in the nation.
- Indiana's "Back on Track Indiana" plan has clear timelines if positive health outcomes are sustained. For example, on June 14<sup>th</sup>, retail stores and malls can operate at full capacity; dining rooms at 75% capacity; bowling alleys and other smaller entertainment venues at 50% capacity. By July 4, personal services, gyms, bars and restaurants are open at full capacity and gatherings of 250 people are allowed including sports venues, conventions, festivals and state fair. <https://backontrack.in.gov/2348.htm>
- "Re-open Kansas" allows all businesses to fully re-open with adherence to health safety guidelines after June 8. <https://covid.ks.gov/ad-astra-a-plan-to-reopen-kansas/>
- Iowa re-opened small retail boutiques, personal services, fitness facilities, entertainment venues and establishments serving alcohol (50% capacity limitation) in May.
- North Dakota small businesses including breweries, bars, restaurants, personal care services, retail and smaller entertainment venues have been open since May 1.
- Wisconsin small businesses have been open (if not prohibited by local health orders) since May 13.

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