



April 30, 2020

The Honorable Dr. Tony Evers
Governor, State of Wisconsin
115 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Governor Evers and Honorable Members of the Legislature,

We write to you as representatives of Wisconsin's business community to urge your support for the Back to Business plan to allow the safe and responsible reopening of Wisconsin's economy.

Together, we represent thousands of businesses of all sizes, from all sectors of our economy, and from all corners of our state. The businesses we represent provide millions of Wisconsin workers with family-supporting jobs, but many of these jobs and the continued viability of thousands of businesses are in jeopardy.

As you are well aware, the economic toll of the COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating to our state. We currently have a jobless rate of more than 18% in Wisconsin, which is roughly double the peak from the Great Recession. More than 460,000 workers have filed for unemployment benefits since social distancing requirements were put in place. Foot traffic at retail businesses is down 50% since the beginning of March, and is down about 70% for the restaurant industry.

Equally troubling, a recent survey of businesses conducted by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and UW-Oshkosh found that 35% of businesses currently shut down will never reopen again if stay at home regulations continue.

We recognize there is a measure of risk associated with reopening businesses, but we believe that risk can be managed and mitigated. The Back to Business plan does exactly that. The plan assigns risks for every business in Wisconsin according to four factors: (1) the infection rate for each business's county, (2) the population density for each business's county, (3) the risk of transmission associated with each type of business, and (4) the capacity of local hospitals to treat COVID-19 patients.

Based upon its individual risk score (minimal, moderate, or substantial), each business would be required to implement mitigation steps to ensure that employees and customers are protected from virus spread. The higher the risk score, the more protective measures businesses will be required to undertake. The mitigation requirements are also customizable to reflect unique circumstances associated with specific industries. For example, customized mitigation requirements would be used for businesses in the hospitality industry, like restaurants, bars and lodging.

The risk scores and mitigation requirements are based upon CDC and OSHA recommendations, and also include input from public health professionals. Because the plan relies on real-time data for infection rates and hospital capacity, it allows for responsive mitigation tactics. If infection rates increase in a localized area, risk scores for businesses will correspondingly increase, and businesses in that area will be required to take more aggressive mitigation steps to prevent the spread.

Taken together, we believe the Back to Business plan is a credible, responsive, adaptable, and tactical means to safely reopen Wisconsin's economy in a way that responsibly manages risk, and reflects the fact that communities in different parts of the state are having very different experiences with this virus.

We respectfully request your support for enactment of this important plan into law, and allow businesses and workers to begin earning a living again as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Wisconsin Business Trade Associations

Alliance of Wisconsin Retailers
American Chemistry Council
Bowling Centers Association of Wisconsin
Chiropractic Society of Wisconsin
Commercial Association of REALTORS® Wisconsin
Independent Business Association of Wisconsin
National Federation of Independent Business
Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin, Inc.
Tavern League of Wisconsin
Tool Die & Machining Association of Wisconsin
Venture Dairy Cooperative
Wisconsin Amusement & Music Operators
Wisconsin Association of Staffing Services
Wisconsin Association of Textile Services

Wisconsin Automatic Merchandising Council
Wisconsin Bankers Association
Wisconsin Builders Association
Wisconsin Cast Metals Association
Wisconsin Dairy Alliance
Wisconsin Grocers Association
Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association
Wisconsin Independent Businesses
Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce
Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association
Wisconsin Petroleum Council
Wisconsin Realtors Association
Wisconsin Restaurant Association

Wisconsin Chambers of Commerce

Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce
Beaver Dam Area Chamber of Commerce
Burlington Area Chamber of Commerce
Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce
DeForest Windsor Area Chamber of Commerce
Delafield Chamber of Commerce
De Pere Area Chamber of Commerce
Dodgeville Area Chamber of Commerce
Elkhart Lake Area Chamber of Commerce
Elkhorn Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
Center, Inc.
Forward Janesville, Inc.
Geneva Lake West Chamber of Commerce
Greater Wausau Chamber of Commerce
Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce
Hartland Area Chamber of Commerce
Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce
Hudson Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
Bureau
Jefferson Chamber of Commerce
Kenosha Area Chamber of Commerce
La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce
Lodi and Lake Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce
Marinette Menominee Area Chamber of Commerce
Merrill Area Chamber of Commerce
Monroe Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Mosinee Area Chamber of Commerce

Muskego Area Chamber of Commerce
New Berlin Chamber of Commerce & Vis. Bureau
New London Area Chamber of Commerce
Oregon Area Chamber of Commerce
Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce
Park Falls Area Chamber of Commerce
Portage Area Chamber of Commerce
Portage County Business Council
Prairie du Chien Area Chamber of Commerce
Pulaski Area Chamber of Commerce
Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce
Shawano Country Chamber of Commerce
Sheboygan Falls Chamber-Main Street, Inc.
South Suburban Chamber of Commerce
St. Germain Area Chamber of Commerce
Stoughton Chamber of Commerce
Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce
The Chamber of Manitowoc County
Tomah Chamber & Visitors Center
Visit Lake Geneva
Walworth County Economic Development Alliance
Waukesha County Business Alliance, Inc.
Waunakee Area Chamber of Commerce
Waupaca Area Chamber of Commerce, Inc.
Wauwatosa Chamber of Commerce
West Bend Area Chamber of Commerce