



April 9, 2020

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

Governor Tony Evers,

We represent employers throughout Wisconsin, from all sectors of our economy, and of all sizes. Employers appreciate the attention to public health that you and your administration have had in recent weeks. We all want to reduce infections of COVID-19 so that Wisconsin can get back to work and get back to spending time with family and friends as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, the social distancing requirements within the Safer at Home order have not come without significant economic cost. We have broken records for unemployment claims, with nearly 300,000 new claims in March alone. Foot traffic at retail businesses is down more than 50%, and is down more than 75% at restaurants. Our state unemployment rate is now estimated to be 13.4%, which is higher than any time in recorded history – and it is expected to climb higher.

Businesses and their employees find themselves in times of unprecedented hardship and uncertainty. Wisconsin needs to bring certainty to workers and businesses alike by setting a firm date to begin the process of reopening our economy on April 24 – the end date for the Safer at Home order.

To be clear, no one expects that our economy would go back to “business as usual” on April 24. We understand that reopening will require a very strategic and well-planned approach that, over time, phases our economy back to an operational level that existed prior to any social distancing requirements.

With that said, policymakers must recognize the economy will not restart without careful preparation and planning. Many businesses simply cannot restart their operations on short notice. Employers must have lead time to recall furloughed employees back to work, make new hires to replace lost employees, restock supplies and raw materials, reengage their supply and distribution chains, and find a means to recapitalize their businesses to accomplish these steps.

Utilizing the April 24 expiration of the Safer at Home order as the target date will allow businesses and workers to engage in the planning necessary to relieve the current economic hardship, and importantly, demonstrate to Wisconsin citizens who are struggling that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Wisconsin businesses fully recognize that as businesses begin to reopen, there will be a need to maintain some level of social distancing requirements, and perhaps other steps to mitigate person-to-person spread that might involve the use of masks, gloves or other personal protective equipment. We also understand that the approach to reopening businesses may involve a more targeted geographic approach which recognizes that different parts of the state are having a very different experience in terms of transmission and infection rates.

Thank you again for your focus on public health during this unfortunate time. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that our economic health is able to come back strong after the COVID-19 pandemic is behind us, and we hope you will agree that Wisconsin needs to begin that process on April 24.

Respectfully,

**Wisconsin Business Trade Associations**

Alliance of Wisconsin Retailers  
American Chemistry Council  
Bowling Centers Association of Wisconsin  
Chiropractic Society of Wisconsin  
Independent Business Association of Wisconsin  
National Federation of Independent Business  
Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin, Inc.  
Tavern League of Wisconsin  
Wisconsin Amusement & Music Operators  
Wisconsin Association of Textile Services

Wisconsin Automatic Merchandising Council  
Wisconsin Cast Metals Association  
Wisconsin Dairy Alliance  
Wisconsin Grocers Association  
Wisconsin Independent Businesses  
Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce  
Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association  
Wisconsin Petroleum Council  
Wisconsin Restaurant Association

**Wisconsin Chambers of Commerce**

Antigo/Langlade County Chamber of Commerce  
Burlington Area Chamber of Commerce  
Cedarburg Chamber of Commerce  
Chippewa Falls Area Chamber of Commerce  
Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce  
Elkhorn Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Center, Inc.  
Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Geneva Lake West Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Brookfield Chamber of Commerce  
Hartland Area Chamber of Commerce  
Jefferson Chamber of Commerce  
Marinette Menominee Area Chamber of Commerce  
Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
Merrill Area Chamber of Commerce  
Milton Area Chamber of Commerce  
Monroe Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
Mosinee Area Chamber of Commerce  
Mount Horeb Area Chamber of Commerce  
Muskego Area Chamber of Commerce  
New Berlin Chamber of Commerce & Vis. Bureau  
New London Area Chamber of Commerce  
Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce  
Park Falls Area Chamber of Commerce  
Portage Area Chamber of Commerce  
Portage County Business Council  
Pulaski Area Chamber of Commerce  
Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce  
The Chamber of Manitowoc County  
Tomah Chamber & Visitors Center  
Walworth County Economic Development Alliance  
Watertown Area Chamber of Commerce  
Wauwatosa Chamber of Commerce  
West Bend Area Chamber of Commerce

cc: Wisconsin Legislators