



THE CHAMBER
FARGO MOORHEAD WEST FARGO

The Honorable Mohamud Noor
379 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Eric Pratt
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg.
Room 3219
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Noor, Chair Pratt, and Members of the Senate File 4091 Conference Committee,

I am writing to you on behalf of the members of the Fargo Moorhead Area Chamber of Commerce. We are one of the largest chambers in both Minnesota and North Dakota, representing over 1,900 member businesses and 109,000 employees.

We applaud the provisions in both the House and Senate bills providing for small business grants. As you are aware, the House bill provides \$35 million for the proposed Small Business Recovery Grant Program while the Senate bill has a provision providing for \$70 million for the existing Main Street COVID-19 Relief Grant Program.

Unfortunately, as the House's proposed Small Business Recovery Grant Program is written in the bill and as the Main Street COVID-19 Relief Grant Program is currently established in law, these grant programs would exclude many small businesses in the Moorhead region and other border communities due to the Minnesota residency requirement.

According to the House bill, eligible participants must "be at least 50 percent owned by a resident of Minnesota;" while the Minnesota Main Street COVID Relief Grant Program requires applicants to be "at least 50% owned by one or more residents(s) of Minnesota."

As you may know, many small business owners in the Moorhead region reside across state lines in Fargo. The Moorhead-Fargo region operates as a single metropolitan area. While the small business owners may happen to reside just a few miles away across state lines, the small businesses they own and operate pay Minnesota taxes and are subject to regulatory oversight by Minnesota state agencies. These businesses have suffered from the same economic hardship as other small businesses across the state of Minnesota that came from the COVID-19 pandemic and state-ordered closures and restrictions of businesses.

Excluding these small businesses from the opportunity to participate in the proposed Small Business Recovery Grant Program or the Minnesota Main Street COVID Relief Grant Program would put our region at an economic disadvantage from neighboring Minnesota communities which are not located along a state border.

It is our hope that the language of the House bill could be amended relating to eligibility to include Minnesota small business owners who are a "resident of a contiguous county of a state bordering Minnesota" or that the eligibility for the Minnesota Main Street COVID Relief Grant Program could include the same modification. Such a change would accommodate the realities of living in a border community that acts as a single

economic engine for our metropolitan area. We hope you will consider this change during the conference committee process.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical issue and your service to our great state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shannon Full". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'S'.

Shannon Full
President & CEO – Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce

CC:
Senator Kent Eken (DFL-Audobon)
Representative Paul Marquart (DFL-Dilworth)
Representative Heather Keeler (DFL-Moorhead)