



July 9, 2020

Chair Tim Mahoney  
365 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Bob Gunther  
277 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Extension of UI Benefits (Sandstede)

Mr. Chairman and Lead Gunther,

On behalf of the 77,000 construction professionals and 15 construction trades affiliated with the State Building Trades Council, I want to thank you for holding an information hearing and encourage you to provide additional unemployment benefits to those workers most effected by the impacts of COVID-19 in Minnesota's mining industry including trades workers. We also want to thank Representative Sandstede for bringing this important proposal forward and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) for their work on ensuring that the workers in Northeastern Minnesota who most need these additional benefits are eligible to receive them.

According to DEED, there have been more than 3,500 unemployment insurance applications filed by trades workers in Northeastern Minnesota since March 16, 2020. In 2019, there were approximately 4,881 construction jobs in that region, many of which are performed at mining facilities. Virtually every one of the 1,200 members of the Iron Range Building Trades Council will work at a mining facility some time during each year. Similarly, many of the 2,200 members of the Duluth Area Building Trades Council perform work at mines. Representative Sandstede's proposal would not only ensure that the employees of mines would be covered by additional unemployment insurance, but also the trades workers that rely on working to maintain these mines to earn family sustaining wages and support their communities.

As the \$600 per week of additional payments provided under the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) expire this month, continuing to recognize and address



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the economic impacts of COVID-19 in Northeastern Minnesota is imperative. Thank you again for your consideration of this important proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica Looman". The signature is written in a light gray color and is positioned above the typed name.

Jessica Looman  
Executive Director

cc: Representative Julie Sandstede