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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**White Bear Area Chamber joins “Minnesota Ready,” urging Governor Walz to reopen all businesses by June 19.**

For nearly 100 days, many local businesses in the White Bear Area have been shuttered due to COVID-19. Workers have been furloughed, supply chains disrupted, and community engagement lost. The White Bear Area Chamber has worked tirelessly to identify resources, answer questions, facilitate discussions and advocate on your behalf to safely open again. This week we call on Governor Walz to take the final step and safely reopen all businesses no later than June 19.

Minnesota is ready! We know our members are ready. They have safely prepared their facility with best practices, safeguarding their employees and customers. For those businesses who are already safely serving customers, adding capacity would help cover costs of staff, supplies, and make it more economically viable to bring all employees back to work.

We know that small businesses were disproportionately impacted by the stay-at-home executive order issued on March 13. Small businesses are the economic fuel of our community’s future. Nearly half of Minnesotans own or work for a small business and create two out of every three new jobs each year. Yet, Minnesota’s small businesses continue to operate at only a small portion of their total capacity, leaving workers waiting for a full return to employment. This is a loss to communities, local governments and the state’s economic and commercial activity.

For these reasons, the White Bear Area Chamber is part of Minnesota Ready – a coalition of more than 50 local chambers and trade associations representing tens of thousands of Minnesota businesses and employees in every corner of the state. We stand ready to support you!

Our collective efforts throughout the week will include a call to action of Minnesota’s governor and legislators to safely reopen all businesses no later than June 19. A date that is two weeks after the last ‘turn of the dial’ which allows time to monitor any health impacts. It is also two weeks before the July 4th holiday, a critical time for many businesses throughout the state. Also, asking to reopen all businesses on June 19th brings date certainty. This allows for advance notice to help you plan for changes in business practices, transition employees back safely, and promote your new practices to your customers to build their confidence in your operations.

As members of the White Bear Area Chamber we ask you to step forward and join us by calling upon the Governor to safely reopen all businesses no later than June 19. We are Minnesota Ready. We are White Bear Area Ready.

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