



March 1, 2021

Minnesota House of Representatives
State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Minnesota State Senate
Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave W.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Stephenson and Chair Dahms,

On behalf of the Minneapolis Regional Chamber, I want to take this opportunity to express my support for The Drink Local Economic Recovery Package. The COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating for the food and beverage industry in Minnesota - more than 94 establishments closed permanently in 2020, three times as many as 2019. Our local bars and restaurants are the cornerstones of community life across our region, and this collaborative bill will spur our state's economic recovery and will be a lifeline for bars, breweries, brewpubs, cideries, distilleries, liquor stores, restaurants, and wineries all over the state.

The restaurant community is a source of great pride in the Twin Cities region with multiple James Beard Award winning restaurants that draw the attention of people from all over the state and country. The recovery and continued success of these attractions is crucial to the economic recovery of our region and state. The Drink Local Economic Recovery Package would put more than 100,000 food & beverage workers back into their jobs, contribute to the state's economic recovery through increased sales tax revenue, support businesses in all sectors of Minnesota's three-tier system, encourage consumer confidence, tourism, and local purchasing, remove barriers to growth, investment, and partnership for small businesses, and reinvigorate communities throughout the state.

We all have a role to play in ensuring the vitality of our robust craft beverage and restaurant scene. The Minneapolis Regional Chamber has been a proud partner in encouraging our members to support their favorite restaurants and craft beverage retailers throughout the pandemic, and we believe this legislation is critical to not only ensure our favorite local spots survive but have the opportunity to thrive as we emerge from this pandemic. Guaranteeing the vitality of our food and beverage community is key to helping the region rebound from this crisis. We need the legislature's support to make this happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Weinhagen', written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Weinhagen
President & CEO
Minneapolis Regional Chamber