To: Governor Tony Evers  
State Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald  
Assembly Speaker Robin Vos  
Members of the State Senate  
Members of the State Assembly

From: Wisconsin Restaurant Association  
Tavern League of Wisconsin

Re: Support for Wisconsin’s Hospitality Industry – URGENT

Date: April 9, 2020

In the last four weeks Wisconsin’s taverns, restaurants and supper clubs have experienced an economic calamity never experienced in our state’s history. The hospitality industry was especially crippled by the limitations enacted during the crisis.

On behalf of the Wisconsin Restaurant Association and the Tavern League of Wisconsin, representing the industry of Class B alcohol license holders and restaurants licensed in Wisconsin, we are urgently requesting a number of items that are critical to help our industry survive.

Restaurant and bars will have been closed to regular business for 38 days after the current Emergency Order expires. Without the additional help of state government, the hospitality industry will suffer significant and permanent losses.

It is especially urgent that our industry receives help as the federal stimulus bill is not nearly enough to address the many financial needs facing the industry. The loan programs contained in the CARES Act are not sufficient because many businesses in our industry will not qualify for loan forgiveness. For our members to survive, we need your help. The following are ideas that we collectively agree need to be addressed immediately.

1. Develop a Hospitality Bridge Grant program for restaurants and bars in the amount of $25,000 for each business utilizing funds distributed to Wisconsin from the CARES Act. This is a Wisconsin solution that helps businesses with their immediate expenses. It will also serve as an economic stimulus plan, allowing supper clubs, taverns and restaurants to pay their bills and stay in business while continuing to provide jobs and contribute to the local and state tax base. This will assist other main street businesses restart and begin circulating cash in the local economy.

2. Work directly with industry to determine how restaurants and taverns can safely reopen to keep the public safe. Ensure that these guidelines are consistent across all municipalities. The
Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection should be part of this process, along
with the Department of Health Services.

3. Permit delivery of alcohol through age verified sales via phone/online transactions for Class B
license holders during the Emergency Order directly or through a third party.

4. Allow for temporary take out of mixed beverage alcohol for Class B license holders as long as
they are contained in a sealed container, e.g. growlers, and include a face-to-face transaction.

5. Repeal the 15 day beer credit law and 30 day alcohol credit day law. License holders who are
unable to make a payment during the shutdown cannot receive future shipments of product,
which will be critical for when operators will be allowed to fully re-open.

6. Prohibit any foreclosures or evictions of any licensee until 60 days after the Emergency Order
expires.

7. Prohibit any insurance cancellations of any licensee until 60 days after the Emergency Order
expires.

8. Suspend the one-week waiting period for unemployment insurance.

9. Waive certain parameters related to the Work-Share Program, specifically eliminating the
current 20-employee minimum and 2-week waiting period.

10. Provide protections for businesses from UI rate increases due to employee layoffs caused by the
public health emergency.

11. Waive 2020 municipal and state license fees for all alcohol and food license holders.

12. Initiate a sales tax holiday for all sales at licensed establishments effective March 17th through
July 30th.

13. Repeal the consignment law for alcohol.


15. Ensure that reimbursement owed by the state for overpayments of estimated taxes are issued
immediately.

16. Prohibit cable/satellite providers from canceling service of a Class B licensee until 60 days after
the Emergency Order Expires

17. Prohibit municipalities from engaging in alcohol sales for the remainder of 2020 and instead
require them to contract with existing licensees for any event where alcohol sales occur.

18. Allow golf courses to re-open to golfers only.

Thank you for your attention to these urgent matters. We look forward to working with you to ease
the financial burden crippling the family businesses of thousands of restaurants and taverns in
Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Joanne Palzkill
Chair, WI Restaurant Association

Chris Marsicano
President, WI Tavern League

Kristine Hillmer
President & CEO, WI Restaurant Association

Pete Madland
Executive Director, WI Tavern League