



2020

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April 17, 2020

The Honorable Steve Bullock
Governor of Montana

Subject: Support for Return to Work Plans for the State of Montana

Dear Governor Bullock:

Thank you for your leadership and your early action on Covid-19. Montana is significantly below initial estimates for coronavirus impacts and among the most well-positioned states in the country on a path forward. I know you have been working around the clock to achieve these exceptional results. Montana is among a handful of states best positioned to begin transitioning to a more open economy.

Since March 14, 71,000 unemployment claims have been filed by Montana workers. The Paycheck Protection Program has now run out of funds, resulting in the loss of a lifeline that has helped thousands of Montana businesses survive the last few weeks. If plans are not quickly implemented to reopen, we are convinced that many businesses will never reopen. Entire industry sectors such as hospitality and retail are at a standstill, which is particularly impactful to the Flathead where tourism is a major driver of our local economy. We are just weeks away from the traditional start of the busy summer season.

It is understandable that health safety will require some phasing on the path towards a full return of the economy, perhaps like the framework released by the federal government yesterday. If so, we are confident that together we will find the right balance between flattening the health care curve and returning Montanans to work. Thanks again for leadership and dedication to the safety and prosperity of all Montanans.

Sincerely,

Joe Unterreiner, President
Kalispell Chamber of Commerce