

December 1, 2020

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Honorable Governor Inslee:

As our State continues to battle the Coronavirus, which has necessitated closures and restrictions of businesses, we are seriously concerned about the ongoing economic impact of the regulations on the viability of our commercial establishments, and the impact on small business owners and employees. We understand the medical reasoning that support the actions that have been taken.

Small businesses make up a substantial amount of our community employment and tax base. Given the importance of tourism to our local economy, the virus has had a significant deleterious effect on our restaurant and hospitality industry. As the State manages the ongoing response to the virus, our communities and businesses need to find a way to bridge the gap between what was, and what our economy will be in the future. While a Federal response is necessary, as you mentioned, it has not been forthcoming since the original CARES Act passage. Waiting and hoping for one isn't a viable solution.

The \$70 million aid package that you announced on November 21, will be helpful. It is not enough. Just in Yakima County, the County and the cities within have provided over \$8 million in grants to businesses and non-profits. While the State (and local governments) are facing difficult financial challenges as a result of the virus, we will need a viable economy when we come through this. We are concerned that the lack of ongoing financial support will leave Yakima (and the State) with a substantially diminished economy, high unemployment, more need for government services, and more misery for the employees and businesses that are trying to manage through this.

The Yakima City Council encourages continued creativity and support from the State to find ways to aid our small businesses. Whether it is grants, targeted tax relief, or flexible zero or low interest business loans, we need solutions and we need them soon.

Respectfully,

Patricia Byers, Mayor