April 20, 2020

The Honorable Kim Reynolds  
Governor, State of Iowa  
State Capitol  
1007 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Governor Reynolds,

I write to thank you and your administration for leading Iowa through these challenging and uncertain times on behalf of nearly 1,500 Quad Cities Chamber members, and as a representative of the entire Quad Cities business community.

As we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a fight that most of us haven’t endured in our lifetimes. Rather, this is unchartered territory and I believe that bold, decisive action is needed by all stakeholders in response to the health of the public, as well as the health of our economy. In the Quad Cities, we are one region based in two states and the Chamber is leading the charge to create a regional economy where all can thrive. With that premise, I ask you to consider some requests that we believe will be beneficial for not only our region, but for all Iowans.

First, the Iowa Small Business Relief Grants are providing much needed assistance to small businesses. Since these applications closed at noon on March 31st, we have seen more restrictions put on Iowa’s businesses, as well as more businesses suffering economic hardship by the COVID-19 pandemic. As you provide additional funding for this grant program, I ask that you allow for the re-opening of Iowa Small Business Relief Grant applications through the Iowa Economic Development Authority. Opening the applications back up, coupled with the additional funding you’ve identified, will help struggling small businesses across Iowa who are in desperate need of help. With no end to this pandemic in the foreseeable future, it is imperative that all impacted small businesses be given a chance to apply for assistance from the state.

Second, the Quad Cities Chamber supports easing restrictions on residents and businesses as soon as it is safe to do so. We support making these decisions in direct correlation to the data, analysis, and advice of health officials. As you convene leaders from across the state to consider this topic, I ask you to include a representative from the Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development industry, like the Quad Cities Chamber, who are working directly with and behalf of the regional business community. It would be helpful to ensure all parts of Iowa are represented in this group and to offer a unique perspective in being in a bi-state regional economy.
Finally, as you consider ways to ease restrictions in Iowa, I ask that you collaborate with other midwestern Governors, including Illinois, in their plans to work together to reopen midwestern economies when COVID-19 begins to subside. A vast majority of our members have either a location in both Iowa and Illinois, employees who live and work in different states, or do business with customers in both states. It will create unnecessary barriers to our businesses, and their customers, if we have two sets of vastly different rules in our region when the economy opens back up. While the federal government has laid out very specific guidelines for when that time comes, it is important to work together with other midwestern states to ensure our businesses are operating on a level playing field.

I appreciate your time in considering these three requests. The Quad Cities Chamber looks forward to continuing our strong partnership with the State of Iowa in supporting and growing our economy. While I know that you are tasked with tough decisions amidst a global pandemic, I believe that these ideas will greatly address the needs of our regional, and statewide, business climate.

If you have any further questions, or would like to discuss these plans further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Paul Rumler
President and CEO
Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce