



Brewer City Council

May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The Honorable Janet T. Mills, Governor  
1 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Governor Mills,

As municipal officials, we understand and appreciate the tremendous responsibility you have in leading our great state through the COVID-19 pandemic. The decisions you and other state officials must make are time sensitive, complex, and have lasting consequences for the health of Maine people and the health of the Maine economy. To that end, we would like to humbly offer you an idea that would augment the efforts currently underway by your administration.

At this moment in time, there is essentially a one size fits all approach to business re-openings. It has generated, as you well know, much consternation among businesses across the spectrum, much of it focused on Augusta. The one lifeline available to businesses, other than eligibility for short term financial assistance from the government, has been the possibility of applying for and receiving a waiver from DECD. The City of Brewer's Economic Development office has been assisting businesses in the application process. It is our understanding that this program has now been curtailed.

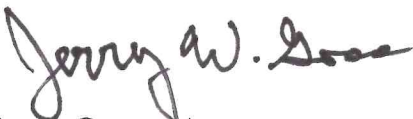
Everyone's objective during this crisis must be to resume some sense of normalcy as soon as possible, properly manage the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and shore up our economy. As your local partners, we would like to assist you in that endeavor by suggesting that you empower municipalities to review and recommend to DECD businesses that should be considered for a waiver. No one knows local businesses, their owners, and their employees better than local government officials. DECD and the Maine CDC could provide a standardized checklist of things a local business must do to be in compliance with COVID-19 guidelines. We understand those checklists are being developed as we speak, but are not ready for roll out. Our Code Enforcement Officers, Health Officers, and/or other designated municipal officials would then meet on site with a business at the business's request. If the business met the standards on the checklist (essentially pre-screened), it would then qualify to be on a list of businesses to be recommended by the town/city to DECD for opening. This would be somewhat labor intensive on the municipal side. However, the upsides

are enormous. If the businesses are unsure about what they will eventually need to do to reopen, this would give them a head start on that. If the business has already done that preparatory work, they could then open (with permission from DECD). It would also dramatically reduce the pressure on Augusta with local, qualified officials doing the legwork. The final determination would remain with the State. We believe it would generate good will, trust in people to do the right thing, and begin to gradually re-open key sectors of the Maine economy.

Being 'close to the ground', as they say, we speak to and hear from people who are frightened by what the future holds for their families, their friends, their jobs, and their community. We know that it is easy to be critical, but far more constructive to recommend solutions. We hope that you will accept this proposal in that spirit, and we stand ready to assist if called upon. We believe a vast majority of other municipalities would do so as well.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



**Jerry Goss**, Mayor



**Thomas Morelli**, Deputy Mayor



**Joe Ferris**, Councilor



**Michele Daniels**, Councilor



**Soubanh Phanthay**, Councilor