



March 19, 2020

Dear President Trump,

We are writing to urge you to declare a national disaster for COVID-19 to allow Washington state residents to access Disaster Unemployment Assistance and receive critically needed revenue if they are laid off due to coronavirus and ineligible for Washington state's Unemployment Insurance. We also request that the U.S. Department of Labor approve Washington's Employment Security Department's proposed changes to Unemployment Insurance to expand coverage for those missing work due to the coronavirus.

Washington state is an epicenter of the nation's outbreak of COVID-19. As our government and community work to contain the spread of the virus, we are faced with the reality that the public health measures we need to take have, and will continue to have, devastating effects on our economy. A recent economic study shows that in our largest counties—King, Snohomish, and Pierce Counties—up to 40% of the 2 million jobs in the region could see wage reductions or temporary layoffs as result of COVID-19.

We urge you to declare a national disaster so individuals can access Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) benefits. We have unemployed workers in our state who do not qualify for unemployment benefits that can only be helped by your action. Implementing DUA would allow individuals who cannot return to work due to COVID-19, but who are ineligible for Washington state's Unemployment Insurance, such as those who are self-employed, to access assistance during the coronavirus crisis.

Washington is working to mitigate the crippling effects of significant job loss and has already expanded unemployment insurance. To date, our state has already passed emergency rules to extend coverage to individuals who would not typically qualify, such as expanding eligibility for individuals on 'standby' who are experiencing a temporary layoff or furlough but expect to return to work. **However, we are still waiting for the U.S. Department of Labor to approve some of the Unemployment Insurance changes, including providing benefits to workers who are quarantined or caring for a family member who is ill, who are not eligible for other benefits like Paid Family and Medical Leave. Please approve Washington's emergency regulations.**

We thank you for your help in this time of urgent need. We stand ready to assist in any way we possibly can.

Sincerely,

Joe Fain
President and CEO
Bellevue Chamber of Commerce

Jon Scholes
President and CEO
Downtown Seattle Association

Taylor Hoang
Executive Director
Ethnic Business Coalition

Brian McGowan
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Greater Seattle Partners

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Washington Tourism Alliance

CC: Members of the Washington State Congressional Delegation