

Representative Janet Ancel  
Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means  
115 State Street, State House  
Montpelier, VT 05609

Dear Representative Ancel,

The Vermont Chamber of Commerce is grateful for the temporary relief of rooms and meals tax payments recently provided by the Administration. I am writing today to request your committee consider the immediate abatement of February and March rooms and meals tax payments. Vermont's restaurants are struggling. They need your support, and this is the most direct way to invest in these Vermonters to ensure that they have a chance of re-opening in the future, hiring back their staff, and paying expenses which continue to mount. This abatement would also be a much-needed investment in Vermont's rural communities and thriving downtowns.

These are trying and unprecedented times for Vermont and specifically for our restaurant members and their workers. As the state's only restaurant association with over 330 establishments and routine outreach to countless more throughout the state, we are very concerned about the economic impact the closure of these businesses will have on our rural communities and downtowns.

The majority of these restaurants are small, independently owned businesses that have been part of a growing and thriving food and beverage industry that helps attract nearly 13 million visitors a year to Vermont.

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, we have maintained an informed perspective on issues that are critical to Vermont's businesses and have received numerous contacts from restaurateurs asking for meaningful relief as they close their businesses, lay off their workers, sanitize their facilities and worry about the future of their business, their workers, their families and their livelihoods.

I am available to discuss this at any time or to coordinate a call with key restaurant owners so you have a complete understanding of the magnitude of economic pain in our state.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter. Taking this action could save many in this industry.

Sincerely,



Betsy Bishop  
President