



## *Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce*

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March 17, 2020

Ref: Bar and Restaurant Closure

Mayor Weldon and Members of the Assembly,

There has been a lot of information circulating in the past 24 hours in relation to the potential closure of bars and restaurants as a next step in containing / mitigating the spread of COVID-19. To this point the actions of the CBJ have been appropriate, metered and in keeping with national standards and healthcare best practices. Many of the actions to date have already had a significant impact on local businesses activity – working from home, school closures and a concerted effort to exercise various “distancing” measures.

The chamber has reached out to several restaurant / bar owners and their industry organization to encourage them to adopt a common set of standards that demonstrate their cooperation in mitigating the virus while continuing to operate, albeit at much reduced levels. Many of them have already done so. The chamber has offered to facilitate any meetings necessary to develop these criteria, and we would urge the Assembly to allow the industry time to work through this in a responsible manner that preserves their ability to conduct business.

Forcing a business to close should be an absolute last resort. Laying off service staff / lower-income workers is a serious and devastating blow to the individual, their families and the business itself. These are life changing events that will last much longer than the virus itself. They do not have the privilege of working for a large business, agency or organization that can pay them while they work from home. We have a very responsible and responsive community, and we should all work very hard to preserve our lifestyle, including the health of our small businesses that have contributed so much to so many over time.

Respectfully

The Board of Directors  
Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce

