

June 3, 2020

TO:

Rep. Michael Marcotte, Chair
Rep. Jean O'Sullivan, Vice Chair
Rep. Charles Kimbell, Ranking Member
Rep. Robert Bancroft
Rep. James Carroll

Rep. Eileen Dickinson
Rep. Stephanie Jerome, Clerk
Rep. Kristi Morris
Rep. Zachariah Ralph
Rep. Tristan Toleno

FROM: Jim Alberghini
71 Brigham Hill Road
Norwich, VT

RE: Impact of Tent/Event and Production Companies on Vermont Economy

Dear Members of the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development,

I am writing in support of Vermont event, tent, production, and sound companies that make their homes in Vermont. They provide employment, enhance the quality of life, and add tax revenue to the State. Over the last 19 years as Managing Director of Northern Stage (WRJ), Production Manager of the Hopkins Center, Dir. of Institutional Events & Logistics for Dartmouth College, and a free-lance artist, I've worked with Rain or Shine, Blood's, Dark Star, Vermont Tent Company, Celebrations, and others on over 3,000 events. Concerts, festivals, theater, weddings, reunions, and graduations made possible by these companies bring people from around the country (and their tourist dollars) to Vermont.

In the past two months I've heard time and again from people I have known and worked alongside that their companies are operating at around 10% of regular business capacity. They are struggling to keep employees on a payroll with no clear plan for business continuity. This is unsustainable and will lead to small businesses with deep roots in Vermont, closing their doors for good. But you know this from them.

What I would like to share is my knowledge that if companies like these are no longer in business, the Arts, Entertainment, Higher Education, and Tourism industries in both Vermont and New Hampshire will suffer. I have been working in these industries for over 30 years, 19 years in this area, and regularly have to go into the market searching for the goods and services these companies provide. If these businesses go under, those of us in the above industries will have no choice but to source resources from Boston and New York City, which are inevitably from three to eight times more costly.

I realize you have many needs to address in the State of Vermont. I have devoted years to helping the homeless and feeding our neighbors experiencing food insecurity and know that there are always many needs. I ask, though, that you find a way to support these businesses that provide the services I've described, so that when COVID-19 is under control, not only these small businesses and their employees, but also the vast network of communities they support, will be able to rebuild.

Regards,



Jim Alberghini