



April 9, 2020

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Garvey,

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce appreciates everything the County Board and Arlington County staff are doing to serve our community during the coronavirus pandemic. These are unprecedented times which highlight the critical importance of local government. We have collaborated on sharing important health and safety messaging from the County to businesses, and articulating the needs of the business community to the County. We look forward to continuing this strong partnership.

The Chamber applauds Arlington Economic Development's proposed establishment of a program of support grants for small businesses. These grants will be an important supplement to federal programs, and we expect that the demand for these grants will be high. As such, we encourage Arlington County to allocate additional funds for these grants, so that Arlington Economic Development can expand these grants to support as many Arlington businesses as possible.

Another way to ensure that our businesses have the liquidity to meet their obligations to staff and suppliers is to defer tax payments until after the coronavirus-induced economic slowdown has passed. The Chamber thanks the Treasurer for her decision to set zero interest and penalties for delayed taxes, so long as they are paid by May 31. However, the need to maintain social distancing is now expected to continue past that date. The City of Alexandria is allowing businesses to remit meals and transient occupancy taxes collected between February 1 and June 30, 2020, in payment plans running through June 30, 2021, and has extended the timelines for business personal property tax filing and select BPOL payments. We encourage Arlington County to follow suit.

It is also essential that Arlington's resumption of normal business is not held back by avoidable delays from the slowdown period. We appreciate that the permit office remains open for online submissions, and encourage continued attention to processing applications in a timely manner. Additionally, permits and plans with approaching deadlines should be extended to account coronavirus-induced work delays. To ensure that the Planning Commission and County Board can still process the expected large number of site plan applications in the second half of 2020, Arlington County should find a manner for resuming the site plan review process, virtually if necessary.

Arlington's business community stands ready to collaborate with our public sector partners to see to Arlington's economic sustainability through the crisis, and the resumption of our economic strength beyond it. As we face unanticipated and unprecedented challenges, the Chamber is prepared to partner with the County and advocate to the governor and General Assembly for our community to have all the tools necessary to meet these challenges.



We thank you for your consideration of these comments, and for all that you are doing to serve our community during this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: Arlington County Board members Katie Cristol, Matt de Ferranti, and Christian Dorsey; Arlington County Treasurer Carla de la Pava; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Deputy County Manager Shannon Flanagan-Watson; Arlington Economic Director Telly Tucker; Planning Commission Chair Elizabeth Gearin