

Dear ES Task Force and City Assembly,

October 3, 2020

I am asking you to consider approving the Extreme Hardship Grant the Economic Sustainability Task Force is working on. This grant would help businesses stay operational through the winter and pay their property and sales taxes. My business alone would keep 8-10 staff members employed and continue to provide safe service for patrons in the downtown core. There are many reasons why keeping businesses open and residents flowing through downtown is important.

The Triangle Club has been hit particularly hard with the pandemic and the shutdowns have resulted in a significant loss of revenue, product, and trained employees who have been forced to seek work elsewhere because of reduced hours and tips. In addition, I have steadily lost my customer base as some chose to stay home, or they sought out establishments offering similar services that were allowed to stay open by CBJ in the recent bar shut down. In doing my part to help provide a safe business I took the initiative to have myself and my staff tested immediately after the last break-out attributed to a wedding. This was done out of an abundance of caution. The costs incurred for this testing came directly from my pocket so I could maintain my essential front-line employees. I have gone above and beyond to be a responsible business owner and yet remain unconvinced that my efforts are recognized by the city. So far, bars have borne the brunt of scrutiny by both the city and the media. As such, I expect my business will be unfairly singled out again for full closure if and when Covid numbers increase for any reason.

Given all of this, I believe my business is a viable candidate for the Extreme Hardship grant. I am encouraging the Assembly's support for the pursuit of this grant. My business and others like mine have been negatively affected disproportionately with economic losses. In the 3rd quarter alone, I experienced over a 55% loss in sales when compared to my 2019 revenue. Currently, my overall cost to do business has gone up due to the increased need for employee training, the replacement of lost product during shutdowns, the costs of testing, and the expenses associated with providing additional PPE and cleaning. Factor all this in with sales being way down and it becomes obvious this situation is not sustainable for us.

Keeping year-round businesses alive and functioning is important for the long-term economic stability of Juneau. Please consider businesses like bars, restaurants, and gyms during this crisis. They provide services and jobs that benefit Juneau year-in and year-out and make it a great place to live. They deserve your support during this difficult time.



Leeann Thomas

triangleclubbar@hotmail.com