



Chemung County
Chamber of Commerce



July 30, 2020

Senator Thomas O'Mara
333 East Water Street
Suite 301
Elmira, NY 14901

Assemblyman Christopher Friend
1250 Schweizer Rd.
Horseheads, NY 14845

Assemblyman Philip Palmesano
105 E. Steuben St.
Bath, NY 14810

Re: New York State Travel Advisory Workforce Implications

Dear Senator O'Mara, Assemblyman Friend, and Assemblyman Palmesano:

On behalf of the members of the Chemung County and Corning Area Chambers of Commerce, we are grateful for your leadership in guiding our community through this current crisis. Although New York was once the epicenter of this health emergency in the United States, we now have one of the lowest rates in the nation and hope to continue on that positive trajectory.

An important component in mitigating the spread has been the travel advisory requiring all travelers coming from states with significant rates of transmission of COVID-19 to quarantine for a 14-day period from the time of their last contact within such designated state(s). Although we understand the importance of a travel advisory to prevent the spread of this pandemic, we implore you to advocate on behalf of specific guidelines and exemptions for residents of Pennsylvania who work in New York's Southern Tier Region as well as consideration of specific county test results. As the guidance currently stands, should future test rates for the entire state of Pennsylvania require quarantine, this would be catastrophic to both our workforce and employers.

As you know, a significant portion of the Southern Tier workforce resides in Pennsylvania. According to the 2011-2015 5 Year American Community Survey Commuting Flows report, more than 2,700 residents of Pennsylvania are employed by Chemung County businesses and nearly 9,500 are employed within the region. Furthermore, more than 6,300 Southern

Cont'd. . .

Tier residents work in Pennsylvania. Our local economy and economic success is tied to our ability to employ across borders. If Pennsylvania were to reach a positive test rate higher than 10 per 100,000 residents over a seven-day rolling average or a testing positivity rate of higher than a 10% over a seven-day rolling average and be added to the travel advisory, our local industry would fail. Proactively, we are asking that guidelines with further clarification on this issue be put into place to allow business the opportunity to plan for workforce protocols in the worst-case scenario. As employers in the Southern Tier struggle to sustain and even revitalize our economy during this crisis, losing our skilled workforce due to a mandated quarantine would be detrimental beyond repair.

We must do everything possible to protect the health of our residents, but we must also support the health of our local economy. Manufacturing, Construction, Small Business, Health-care, Education, and more would be dramatically impacted by the inability of Pennsylvanians to report for work in the Southern Tier. Please prevent the reversing of all the progress we have made as a region through the Regional Economic Development Council. We understand that we must enforce the travel advisory as a whole, but surely there must be a way to allow the workforce just across the border to work safely and effectively here in New York.

Sincerely,



Kamala Keeley
President & Chief Executive Officer
Chemung County Chamber of Commerce

Able2 Enhancing Potential Inc.
Arnot Realty Corporation
CAF USA
Carbide USA
Central Steuben Chamber of Commerce
Chemung County Chamber of Commerce
Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning
& the Finger Lakes, Inc.
Databranch Inc.
Elmira College
Elmira Savings Bank
Finger Lakes Audiology, PLLC
Holiday Inn Elmira- Horseheads
Jeanie's Variety Store
Mengel, Metzger, Barr & Co., LLP
Pathways, Inc.
Southern Tier Economic Growth
Swan Morss Insurance
The Greater Southern Tier BOCES
The Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes
Warehouse Carpet & Flooring Outlets, Inc.
Williams Construction and Energy Savers

Arnot Health
BilDan Precision Manufacturing
Cameron Manufacturing & Design
Career Development Council Inc.
Chemung Canal Trust Company
Chemung County Child Care Council
Corning Area Chamber of Commerce
Corning Incorporated
Elm Chevrolet, Inc.
Elmira Eastowne Mall, LLC
Fagan Engineers & Land Surveyors, PC
FM Howell & Company
I.D. Booth
John Milles Electric, Inc.
Motor Components, LLC
pladis Global
Southerntier Custom Fabricators
Sweeney Enterprises LLC
The Hilliard Corporation
Vulcraft of New York, Inc.
Watkins Glen International
XGen Pharmaceuticals DJB