



22 January 2021

The Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce is the leading advocate for businesses in Eastern Idaho, representing over 600 businesses with over 25,000 employees actively engaged in growing our region's economy. On their behalf, we request our legislators cease their efforts to declare an end to the emergency declaration regarding Idaho's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We appreciate their concern and desire to move forward by putting this emergency declaration behind us; however, the real-world consequence of a premature end to the emergency declaration will further harm our ability to recover physically and financially from this pandemic. Ending the emergency declaration risks losing federal aid to our state that would provide support for immunization distribution, for deployed National Guard members, and for rebounding businesses still struggling to recover from this pandemic.

With Idahoans being immunized daily and by continuing to follow the recommended safety guidelines of wearing masks, social distancing, and personal hygiene, we can see that the end is near for this pandemic. Now is not the time to declare victory—especially if doing so would jeopardize the financial support facilitating our recovery. Further, after thousands of deaths in our state, we must do all we can to mitigate further loss of life. Declaring an end to the pandemic prematurely will endanger more Idahoans.

We urge our great legislators to withdraw their efforts to symbolically end this pandemic. Be patient until we can safely return to normality. Withdraw SCR101 and all other bills designed to end this emergency declaration regarding COVID-19. Having heard from leaders of FEMA and other agencies, a strong concern is that the end the emergency declaration would bring an end to the federal aid helping our local businesses get back on their feet. East Idaho businesses are counting on vaccines to open our economy completely. Do not endanger funding which can ensure our bright future when we are almost through this pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Chip Schwarze". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Chip Schwarze
President/CEO