



March 18, 2020

Governor Tim Walz  
130 State Capitol  
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz:

On behalf of the Minnesota Newspaper Association's 300 members, we want to express our appreciation for your leadership in responding to what by any standard is a crisis for our state, as well as for the entire country. Your advice, guidance, and composure have provided reassurance to people throughout Minnesota.

As you know, MNA's members collectively provide the state's residents with a large portion of the news and information on which they rely. The last few weeks have vividly demonstrated how our members work closely with government officials to keep the public accurately informed during emergencies. We believe it's vital that this critical work continue unabated as the COVID-19 crisis unfolds, and that the news media be permitted to perform their constitutionally recognized role without inhibition.

We therefore respectfully request your assurance that the work of the state's traditional, professional news organizations be deemed an "essential service," and that the operations of those organizations will remain unrestricted during the COVID-19 crisis, so that the public in all parts of the state may continue to be reliably informed about developments related to their health, safety, and welfare. We also hope that this status would continue should you issue any future statewide declarations dealing with business limitations, so that the news media can remain unhindered in gathering news and reporting it to the public without fear of violating government mandates.

Recent experience has demonstrated that a great deal of false and misleading information about the coronavirus is being widely disseminated via the internet, and through social media. Professional news organizations can provide the most effective antidote to this kind of bad information, and the harmful effects it may have.

We look forward to working with your office as our members strive to serve the state's residents in the face of this unprecedented challenge.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris Knight  
President, Minnesota Newspaper Association  
Regional President APG Media and Publisher, *Mesabi Daily News*