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To: Chairman Burzichelli, Vice-Chairman Schaer & Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee

From: Christopher Emigholz, Vice President of Government Affairs

Date: March 17, 2021

RE: **NJBIA Support for Seven COVID-Relief Bills Posted in Your Committee Today: A-4958, A-5133 & 5 EDA Funding Bills**

Good morning! My name is Christopher Emigholz, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs for the New Jersey Business & Industry Association (NJBIA) covering tax, budget and economic development issues. On behalf of our member companies that provide 1 million jobs in our State and make NJBIA the largest statewide business association in the nation, thank you for posting these pro-business bills while businesses are facing a myriad of COVID-challenges and need your support. **NJBIA supports A-4958 (Tully), A-5133 (Greenwald/Chiaravalloti/Benson) and the 5 EDA funding bills to improve our business climate in the wake of the pandemic, and we thank Chairman Burzichelli, the bills' sponsors and this committee for advancing them.**

To understand why these bills are needed, it is important to understand some of the disheartening business struggles. The number of small businesses open now in New Jersey, compared to pre-pandemic January of 2020, is down 33.9%, and their revenue is down 33%. Throughout the pandemic, New Jersey has consistently had among the worst unemployment rates in the nation (7.9% today) and has seen more and more people drop completely out of the labor market. These bills will help our economy and hopefully address these distressing numbers.

NJBIA asks you to vote “yes” on all seven of these bills posted in your committee because they encourage and support businesses in today’s difficult climate:

- A-4958 (Tully) – NJBIA supports this bill as it will provide sales tax relief to small businesses conducting their business outdoors during these colder months.
- A-5133 (Greenwald) – NJBIA supports this bill because it provides some certainty and predictability for the greater reopening of hospitality businesses that have struggled significantly with the overly restrictive limits put in place due to the pandemic.
- 5 EDA Funding Bills: A-5443 (Johnson/Freiman/Armato), A-5444 (Mazzeo/Tully/Mejia), A-5445 (Swain/Mosquera/Taliaferro), A-5446 (Zwicker/Downey), A-5447 (Carter/Houghtaling/McKnight) – NJBIA strongly supports these five bills with a collective \$100 million in additional EDA funding for micro-businesses, hospitality businesses, childcare centers, nonprofits and cultural institutions – all businesses that have been hit so hard by this pandemic and limited in their operations by government. Many of these

businesses would fall in the leisure and hospitality category which has been especially hard hit. Hospitality small business revenue has declined 84.8% and their closures are 54.2%, worse than the aforementioned numbers for all small businesses.

NJBIA thanks you for your consideration of our perspective and asks for you to vote “yes” on these important bills that that will help employers throughout New Jersey. Please let me know if you have any questions.