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Dear Members of the East Downtown Council,

We are writing to you today - at the request of the full board - to bring to your attention two city regulation changes that the Minneapolis City Council are beginning to consider. While neither proposed regulation has been put into final text and content, there are talking points the city staff have created to discuss these issues and council members have been speaking publically about these ideas, so the intended reach of these regulations has been clearly articulated. A city website containing more information is at [www.minneapolismn.gov/workingfamiliesagenda](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/workingfamiliesagenda) where you can access the information released by city staff and the working group formed in April 2015.

On Tuesday we attended a meeting concerning this issue. Present were people representing the Minneapolis Downtown Council, Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce, many trade/business associations and many businesses, large and small. There were 40+ people in the room representing a vast swath of businesses throughout the city. This coalition is called the Workforce Fairness Coalition. It is being formed in opposition to these regulatory revisions. Information put out by the coalition can be found at [www.workforcefairnesscoalition.com](http://www.workforcefairnesscoalition.com).

The proposed regulations will affect every Minneapolis business with one or more employees. Whether you ultimately agree or disagree with these proposed regulations, the sweeping extents of the regulations, the lack of clarity of the actual language and the speed at which they are moving through City Hall have created urgency for the business community to make their voice heard. While many on the EDC board stated that the intentions of the proposed regulations may be noble by addressing the small portion of businesses that do not treat their employees fairly, the proposed implementation appears to be a clumsy overreach and could be very damaging to the vitality of our city in the long term by putting us at an economic disadvantage to our neighbors.

At this time we simply do not have enough information about the merits and consequences of these proposed regulations to make informed decisions. The sense of the board at Thursday's board meeting was mostly in opposition to the proposed regulations with several folks needing more time to digest the information. It appears that the uncertainty and questions about the need for such sweeping changes to city regulations – not to mention the fact that the enforcement mechanism is completely unaddressed in any of the city's pronouncements – is very troubling to everyone. In summary, the board feels this is too much proposed change without adequate time to study and shape these regulations so that they can truly address the intended problems without penalizing others.

At this time the EDC Board has not taken a formal position in support of or opposition to these proposed regulations. At Thursday's board meeting there was a general sense of urgency to connect with our membership to ask you to do two things:

1. Please read the information put out by the city and by the Workforce Fairness Coalition. We urge you to then contact your councilmember to voice your opinion. Please do so by October 16<sup>th</sup> – which is the date the city has asked to have comments received by. You can find your councilmember's email addresses and phone numbers at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/members/index.htm>. Please also consider contacting Mayor Hodges about this issue. You can find her contact information at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/mayor/contact/index.htm>.
2. Please respond to both of us and let us know your opinions. In recent years the EDC has not taken formal positions on contentious public issues, whether they are perceived to benefit or not benefit our membership. The board will likely be asked to formally declare our stance on this issue and we want your input. This reflects the growing influence the East Downtown Council plays in the community – but that also requires us to be better prepared for such occurrences in the future. The EDC Board will formulate a process for considering future such requests. But for now, we want to hear directly from you to best understand where our membership's sentiments lie on these issues. Please email your thoughts to [dcollison@downtownminneapolis.org](mailto:dcollison@downtownminneapolis.org) and [paul@msrdesign.com](mailto:paul@msrdesign.com) as soon as possible. We will collect your comments, using them to seed a conversation among the board and possibly take action based on your input.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters.

Best,



Paul C N Mellblom  
EDC Board President



Dan Collison  
EDC Executive Director