

# Opportunity Wisconsin, Main Street Alliance: Hear from tourism industry leaders

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LA CROSSE, Wis.—Last night, community leaders from La Crosse, Door County, and Bayfield gathered for a virtual conversation hosted by [Opportunity Wisconsin](#) and [Main Street Alliance](#) to discuss COVID-19's impact on Wisconsin's tourism industry. Community leaders held the discussion within hours of President Trump ending hopes of additional COVID-19 relief [before flip flopping](#) and suggesting Congress pass an inadequate, piecemeal relief package.

“We know it did not have to be this way and that the summer 2020 season could've been and should've been just like any tourist season for our speakers and their communities,” said Shawn Phetteplace, Main Street Alliance Wisconsin State Manager. “President Trump's failed leadership, botched handling, and continuous downplaying of the pandemic have led to these communities making tough decisions and we cannot make these folks whole again until President Trump shows leadership and we squash the virus.” [[WATCH](#)]

By walking away from coronavirus relief, President Trump is finally admitting what we already knew: He has no interest in helping Wisconsin workers and families recover from the economic crisis that he exacerbated and deepened. He would rather focus on rushing to confirm a Supreme Court nominee who would take away people's health care than on working with Congress to help Badger State families impacted by a pandemic.

“Tourism is not red or blue. It’s green. It’s about money and we want more of it here in Wisconsin,” said Wisconsin State Representative Jill Billings. [[WATCH](#)] “We need more from the Federal government. We need another package going forward as we hit the lean late fall-winter months. I’m disappointed that there’s no better leadership on the Federal level. “ [[WATCH](#)]

In 2019, Wisconsin’s tourist economy [generated \\$1.6 billion in state and local revenue taxes](#). Without these revenue taxes, every Wisconsin household would pay “an additional \$687 to replace traveler taxes to maintain existing services.” Without revenue coming from the tourism industry, more money will come out of Wisconsinites’ pockets.

Because President Trump ended the negotiations for a broader stimulus package:

- Thousands of Wisconsin families hoping for additional relief will now be unable to afford their rent and mortgages, and overall demand will continue to drop, which will hurt the economy and make this crisis last longer.
- Wisconsin small business owners across the country will now be forced to permanently lay off workers they were hoping to bring back on.
- Teachers, firefighters, and other essential state and local workers across the Badger State could lose their jobs as state government budgets hit a cliff with no additional federal support.
- More than 30 million unemployed American workers now face permanent income cuts in a pandemic.

There’s no denying that the economic crisis sparked by coronavirus is being fueled

by President Trump's actions and misguided economic agenda.

“Some of this is COVID-related, but I would also say the bigger issue here is a lot of us, no matter the sector, are having a really tough time, we were having a hard time before this. Main Street, rural, small town, even if you get a lot of tourism, Main Street is going through some rough times so I think the businesses are more fragile,” said Joanne Cirillo, Bayfield Wine and Spirits. [[WATCH](#)]

Yesterday's news came on the heels of Friday's “[massively concerning](#)” jobs report which raised major alarms that the economy is in crisis and the tepid recovery has rapidly decelerated. Job growth has slowed significantly over the last few months, which highlights the fact that the CARES Act supported an initial recovery, and now that it has ended, the economy is starting to sputter.

“I was even more disappointed in the Wisconsin Congressional delegation that's represented on the Republican side. I was hopeful that at least one or two of the Republicans representing the state of Wisconsin would support Speaker Pelosi and the Democrats' recent funding bill that would bring us more PPP money and funding for restaurants and bars,” said Lars Johnson, Al Johnson's Swedish Restaurant & Butik. [[WATCH](#)]