

Tech Council: Solid science, economic reasons behind masks to fight COVID-19, board says

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MADISON, Wis. – The board of directors of the Wisconsin Technology Council voted unanimously Tuesday to endorse the “soundness of the science” behind public orders that urge the wearing of masks to tamp down the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Wisconsin.

The board voted, 37-0, to endorse a resolution that urged support for wearing masks under “appropriate conditions” to help hasten the coming of the day when Wisconsin’s broader economy, schools and other institutions can get back to normal.

The Tech Council was incorporated in 2001 to serve as the independent, bipartisan and non-profit science and technology advisory board to state government. Its directors hail from all sizes of private business, the investment community, academic research institutions, health care, law, accounting and other disciplines tied to the tech-based economy.

The resolution noted it is “not the role of the Tech Council” to comment on the legality or constitutionality of statutes, regulations or emergency orders – including Governor’s Emergency Order No. 1, which took effect Saturday.

It continued: “However, it is a legitimate role of the Tech Council to evaluate the science behind existing and proposed state policies, and to provide its

recommendations to the executive and legislative branches on such.”

The resolution highlighted the role of asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic people in spreading the disease, as defined by a host of scientific and medical organizations in Wisconsin and well beyond. It said there is “strong scientific evidence” that simple masks help to filter most viral particles and, while such masks are not an absolute defense for everyone, they have been shown to broadly reduce serious illness and death.

It also noted that widespread wearing of masks could “help to avoid the return of the stringent ‘safer at home’ orders” that took place in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. “The economic health of the state could be dramatically improved by avoiding such ‘safer at home’ orders in the future,” it read.