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January 16, 2019

The Honorable Steve Mnuchin
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave. NW 20220

Dear Secretary Mnuchin:

I write to express my concerns about the effects of the partial government shutdown on Colorado's craft brewers.

As you know, the President has refused to sign a continuing resolution or an appropriations bill without funding for an ineffective and wasteful border wall, which has led to the longest government shutdown in our history. As a result, the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) has been unable to review or approve any labeling changes, new formulae, or permits for brewers and distillers across the country. In fact, according to one report, more than 11,000 applications for alcohol labels have been backlogged during the government shutdown.

In Colorado, there are nearly 400 breweries—from large breweries with hundreds of employees, to smaller family-owned businesses. Accordingly, the President's decision to shut down the government has been especially difficult for our state. For New Belgium Brewing and Oskar Blues Brewery, both of which have operations in Colorado and North Carolina, a prolonged shutdown will significantly delay the planned launch of several new beers throughout the year. Similarly, Boulder's Upslope Brewing Company has already provided distributors with their new release schedule but now faces uncertainty; if the shutdown worsens an already lengthy approval backlog, brewing companies could suffer delays and tens of thousands of dollars of lost revenue. Three Barrel Brewing, a smaller brewery in rural Del Norte, has already brewed a batch of pale ale that could spoil before receiving TTB's approval, costing thousands of dollars. And two Denver Metro breweries, Spice Trade Brewing and Westminster Brewing Company, have permit approvals pending with TTB that are preventing them from expanding in a new location and reopening under new ownership, respectively.

The uncertainty of a government shutdown is affecting these business owners' ability to invest, hire, grow, and hit revenue targets.

The inability of these companies to plan also affects farmers, suppliers, and everyone along the craft brewing supply chain, an industry that contributes \$76.2 billion and more than 500,000 jobs to the U.S. economy.

This is just one example of how the President's decision to shut down the government over an ineffective and wasteful border wall (that Mexico was supposed to pay for) is hurting the economy and the livelihoods of communities across the country.

It is my hope you can impress upon the Administration the importance of working with Congress to open the government as soon as possible. In the meantime, please detail how the Department of the Treasury intends to address the backlogs that have begun to hurt breweries across the country.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael F. Bennet". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and a stylized "B".

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator