



WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

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Coronavirus Information and Resources

Bulletin Distributed: January 28, 2021

WCMA distributes member bulletins focused on coronavirus information on Thursdays and as breaking news warrants. WCMA delivers electronic newsletters with broader content on Tuesdays. Please contact [WCMA staff](#) with any questions.

Wisconsin Lawmakers Delay Vote on Mask Mandate, With Nearly \$50M in Food Aid in Jeopardy

Wisconsin Assembly Republicans paused today's planned vote on a [Senate-approved resolution](#) designed to end Governor Tony Evers' emergency declaration and associated orders, including the statewide mask mandate.

The delay comes less than 24 hours after the [release of a report](#) showing Wisconsin stands to lose \$49.3 million in federal food aid, as a result. The COVID-19 aid package approved by Congress in December provides this additional assistance, but only for low-income households in states where there is an existing emergency health order in place.

Assembly leader Robin Vos (R-Burlington) told reporters today that it was important to understand the ramifications of a vote before taking it, but that he expected the Assembly will [approve the resolution](#) in the days ahead. The measure could not be vetoed by the Governor, and would take immediate effect.

41 states currently have mask mandates in place.

Wisconsin COVID Package Amended Again

Republicans in control of the Wisconsin State Senate and Assembly today agreed to changes to bill addressing pandemic-related concerns, though the proposal's strong civil liability protections for business owners remain intact.

The legislative package, which has ping-ponged between the bodies in recent weeks, now reflects Assembly Republicans' priorities, measures which may also trigger a veto from Governor Tony Evers, including:

- Banning employers from requiring vaccination as a condition of employment

- Stripping public health officers' authority to mandate vaccinations
- Stripping public health officers' authority to continue emergency orders without approval from local elected officials every 14 days
- Requiring legislative review and approval of the Governor's direction of all future COVID-19 aid

Senate Republicans tacked on another amendment late this afternoon which would allow the Governor to declare a public health emergency, but only for the purposes of accessing federal aid, and banning him from issuing any related orders. This amendment could be considered by the Assembly next week.

WCMA continues to advocate for member priorities - including civil liability protection and the preservation of employers' rights to determine their own vaccination policies - and will keep members informed of relevant developments.

Biden Directs OSHA to Boost Worker Safety Efforts

President Joe Biden has directed the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to ramp up its COVID-19 workplace safety enforcement. [Biden's order](#) requires OSHA to update its employer guidance on COVID-19 by February 4, and empowers the agency to issue new "emergency temporary standards" if needed.

WCMA will keep members informed of any future changes to current OSHA guidance via our electronic newsletters and bulletins.

Coronavirus Headline News

Dairy Industry

- *Politico*: [Food stamp spending jumped nearly 50 percent in 2020](#)

Wisconsin

- *WDJT-TV*: [Wisconsin doctors advise double masking during COVID-19 panel discussion](#)
- *Wisconsin Rapids Tribune*: [Wisconsin doctor's study show schools can be COVID-19 safe with masks, precautions](#)

National/International

- *Forbes*: [Businesses receiving federal pandemic aid face prospect of surprise state income tax bills](#)
- *Reuters*: [COVID-19 pummels U.S. economy in 2020; performance weakest in 74 years](#)
- *WTHR-TV*: [Bill protecting Indiana businesses from COVID-19 lawsuits passed by state Senate](#)
- *Texas Tribune*: [Gov. Abbott pushes Legislature to protect businesses from coronavirus-related lawsuits](#)
- *Reuters*: [Hopeful signs on pandemic lead some U.S. states to ease coronavirus restrictions](#)
- *New York Times*: [CDC says it is safe to reopen schools, with precautions](#)

Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) for More Resources

WCMA's coronavirus resources page on [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) is updated daily, featuring information on employee safety, regulatory flexibility, operations guidance, federal and state support, and ways to salute your critical, essential staff.

WCMA Key Contacts

Members with pandemic-related questions or concerns should feel encouraged to contact WCMA staff at any time. Here are ways to get in touch.

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