



*June 5, 2020*

**Office of Governor Tim Walz & Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan**  
130 State Capitol  
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan,

We are members of the Society for the Advancement of Biology Education Research (SABER), a national organization of researchers dedicated to improving the teaching and learning of post-secondary biology. Since its inception in 2011, SABER has held its annual meetings in Minneapolis. Each year the society grows, and over the years we have brought in thousands of our members from across the US and internationally for a four-day conference at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities in Minneapolis. Our attendees flew in using your airports, stayed in your hotels, and frequented your restaurants. We generate over half a million dollars in revenue for your state each year. Were it not for COVID-19, this year would have been the same. As our organization grows, so too does its financial impact on your state.

The Black community in the United States deserves to feel safe, including the Black members of our professional community. Minneapolis is not that safe place. We stand in solidarity with the Black community in Minneapolis and across the United States against the recent and historic injustices they have faced.

Because of recent and historical incidents of systemic racism and police brutality against Black visitors, residents, and protestors of all colors in Minneapolis, the future of the annual SABER meeting in Minnesota is now in question. To consider staying in Minneapolis and continuing to bring business to Minnesota, within the next weeks and months, we need to see tangible evidence of action for justice for Mr. Floyd and of changes in Minnesota law enforcement. Such changes would include de-escalation training for police, firing of police who violate human rights, and implicit bias training for all government officials, police, and other public servants. These actions will allow its citizens of color to feel protected, not threatened, by police. We need to see the requests, needs and perspectives of your Black communities in Minneapolis and Minnesota honored.

We recognize that you cannot carry out these actions alone, but your offices can create a powerful momentum for change. Black lives matter to us and we ask you to demonstrate that they matter to you too.

Sincerely,  
Jenny Knight, President  
Jenni Momsen, President elect  
Mary Pat Wenderoth, Past President  
Joe Dauer, Secretary  
Kristine Callis-Duehl, Treasurer

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