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Dear Distinguished Members of the Milwaukee Common Council:

On behalf of Visit Milwaukee, I want to express our profound concern about the recent shooting at Elmnt Lounge on Water Street that took the lives of two individuals and injured three others. This act of violence, which unfolded in the heart of our downtown, is not only a human tragedy but also a direct threat to Milwaukee's reputation as a safe, welcoming destination for visitors, businesses, and conventions.

The consequences of this incident have already reached beyond the victims and their families. A national meeting planner, here to evaluate Milwaukee as a potential host for a major convention, witnessed the immediate aftermath of the shooting from her hotel room window. Understandably, this experience left a deeply negative impression and may jeopardize our city's ability to secure this and other future conventions. Convention business is not hypothetical; it sustains thousands of local jobs, supports small businesses, and generates millions of dollars in revenue for the City of Milwaukee each year.

Allowing this establishment to continue operating as it does today raises serious questions about public safety and undermines the hard work being done to strengthen confidence in Milwaukee as a destination. As such, Visit Milwaukee respectfully asks the Council to consider: the ongoing risks to residents, visitors, and downtown workers if the establishment continues to operate without meaningful change; the damage to Milwaukee's reputation when such incidents occur in the very heart of our hospitality district; and the broader economic impact on our city if planners and visitors begin to question Milwaukee's ability to provide a safe environment.

The future of Milwaukee's tourism and convention business depends on ensuring that our visitors feel safe and welcome. The tragic events tied to Elmnt Lounge stand in direct opposition to that goal. For the sake of our community's wellbeing, our economic vitality, and our city's reputation, we urge the Council to weigh these concerns very carefully in its deliberations about this establishment's future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peggy Williams-Smith', is written over a horizontal line.

Peggy Williams-Smith
President & CEO
Visit Milwaukee

