

Burlington Economic Recovery Network (BERN)
414 Locust Street
Burlington, Ontario
L7S 1T7

Premier Doug Ford
Premier's Office
Room 281 Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON
M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

On December 10, 2020, City of Burlington Council passed the enclosed resolution on COVID-19 Fairness for Business (COVID-19 emergency response verbal update CSSRA-13-20) to address the inequity created between small businesses required to close and businesses permitted to open and conduct sales when COVID lock down measures are in place.

The City of Burlington's fundamental priority throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been to protect the health and safety of Burlington residents, employers and employees; this continues to be our highest priority during this crisis.

The members of Team Burlington (Burlington Economic Development, Burlington Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Burlington, Burlington Downtown Business Association and Aldershot Village BIA) came together to create the Burlington Economic Recovery Network to engage our business community and ensure they are receiving the support they need during this challenging time.

While we continue to support the Province's COVID-19 re-opening framework, it is critical to recognize that some of the public health measures have created an uneven playing field in affected jurisdictions, placing small businesses and local retailers at a significant competitive disadvantage when lock-down occurs. Specifically, larger retail outlets, which are permitted to remain open and sell more than just essentials are in direct competition with small retailers, which are limited to online sales and curb side pick-up or delivery.

As the second wave of COVID-19 takes its toll, we must do everything possible to protect our economy, while at the same time balancing the interests of public health and safety. The survival of small businesses is essential to the Province's recovery efforts, and as such, the City is requesting that the Province revise the Rules for Areas in Stage 1 under Ontario Regulation 82/20 (the "lockdown") to address the current inequity between small businesses required to limit their

sales to online or curbside pickup and those businesses permitted to remain open and continue in-person sales; to avoid unfair competitive advantage between businesses; and to provide consistency with continued effective health risk management in consultation with Public Health.

In addition, the City is requesting that the following be clearly established and implemented, with additional provincial resources provided to support compliance and strict enforcement:

- (1) clearly defined requirements for masking/face coverings, and
- (2) physical distancing with capacity limits determined on a per square metre basis for persons admitted to *all* businesses, including restaurants, which are currently in Halton Region under the red control level of the COVID-19 response framework subject to a hard-capped occupancy limit of 10 regardless of business size or capacity based on the current provincial re-opening framework.

The City encourages the Province to move forward with these measures expeditiously, as many small businesses and local retailers across the province are on the brink of insolvency and need support from all levels of government. It is our shared priority to reach a balance in preventing further spread of COVID-19 to keep our community safe, while supporting these businesses that will form the foundation upon which we build back an even stronger economy.

As we move through the pandemic, please know that the City of Burlington will continue to seek opportunities to work with you to help Burlington residents and businesses. To that end, we are very interested in piloting unique/additional parameters and programs with our local business community that may be key to offering a safe consumer and employee experience so that businesses can remain open and viable.

As evidence of our capacity to innovate, to date, we have achieved significant success with our novel **Burlington Safe Restart Grant** program funded by the City. This relief program, which is the first of its kind, provides much needed funding to support local businesses with their safe re-opening plans, including taking the POST Promise to increase consumer confidence and ensure a safe place of business for both employees and customers. We were honoured to be joined by Minister Prabmeet Sarkaria, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction, as well as representatives from the Post Promise, when we unveiled the recipients of the first round of grants.

Building on this success and our innovation mindset, we would welcome the opportunity to explore additional ways to work together to support the business community during these challenging times and to position our economy for recovery. For example, we believe that public health measures and restrictions on business that are currently “one size fits all” could be varied based on local public health conditions, demographics and geographic scale. The provincial

government has been responsive in rolling out and adapting public health on a provincial scale, but as we move into the second year of managing our pandemic response we need to acknowledge that what is appropriate in some jurisdictions may not be appropriate in others, as different communities face different issues in managing public health while balancing local economic concerns. The City of Burlington and our business community would be pleased to build on the innovative partnerships we have established to date and to work with the province as a pilot for more tailored local solutions.

Thank you in advance. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Burlington Economic Recovery Network's lead on this matter Carla Nell, President & CEO of the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, at Carla@burlingtonchamber.com or (905) 639-0174 ext. 7212. It would be a pleasure to hear from you.

Sincerely,



Randall Smallbone
Chair, Burlington Economic Recovery Network



Mayor Marianne Meed Ward
City of Burlington

Cc:

Minister Rod Phillips
Associate Minister Prabmeet Sarkaria
MPP Jane McKenna
MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos
MPP Parm Gill
Burlington City Council
Halton Regional Council