

March 19, 2020

Hon. Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
17th Floor, 777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

RE: Working with municipalities to support business during the COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Minister Clark,

Thank you for your continued leadership to support both employers and employees as they experience economic disruption related to COVID-19. As the situation continues to evolve, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) is taking concerns from the business community and communicating them to all levels of government.

I am writing to you to request that the Ontario government work with municipalities to support local businesses as they experience unprecedented revenue losses. As you know, businesses of all sectors and sizes are suffering under this very necessary shutdown. With revenue down considerably for nearly the entire business community, any way the government can reinforce their cash flow means the longer they can continue to pay their employees and keep the lights on.

The OCC would like to see regions and municipalities delay or temporarily eliminate taxes and fees on business. Specifically, government should delay the deadline for payment of property taxes and waive all interest charges or late penalties charged on those payments.

Furthermore, we encourage you to ask municipalities to postpone or cancel the collection of tourism marketing and/or accommodation taxes for the hospitality sector, which is among the hardest hit during the pandemic. Ideally, businesses would be able to retain those funds.

Finally, municipalities and regions should do what they can to accelerate those payments owed to private sector and non-profit vendors, to help get much-needed cash into the hands of local business as quickly as possible.

Public health and safety are priorities for all Ontario businesses. We will continue to monitor and assess new developments pertaining to COVID-19 closely and work with our members, partners, and all levels of government to provide support to Ontario business.

Sincerely,



Rocco Rossi
President and CEO
Ontario Chamber of Commerce