



Canadian
Chamber of
Commerce

Chambre de
Commerce
du Canada

The Voice of Canadian Business™
Le porte-parole des entreprises canadiennes™

May 26, 2020

Hon. Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

RE: Immediate need to fix the CECRA rent subsidy program

Dear Deputy Prime Minister and Premiers:

Thank you for your collaboration and support for the Canadian business community during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important that governments at all levels continue to respond to changing conditions and adapt as they roll out emergency supports quickly. With June 1st fast approaching, main street businesses urgently need your help with addressing their commercial rent obligations.

Rent is one of the most significant fixed costs for a main street business. It is worrisome that 42% of the businesses surveyed in by the Canadian Survey on Business Conditions had not secured a deferral on commercial rent.

Many main street businesses that closed bricks and mortar locations to fight the spread of COVID-19 have not been able to generate any revenue (or only very little) for longer than two months. It will take time for these businesses to recover once they fully or partially reopen. In the meantime, bills such as commercial rent payments continue to pile up.

Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade and businesses across Canada were encouraged by the announcement of a federal-provincial/territorial program to provide much-needed commercial rent relief. However, since the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) announcement, Chambers have collectively heard from numerous businesses that the program will not provide the support needed without improvements. The main concern is that commercial landlords may choose not to participate in the program or have already advised tenants that they will not be participating.

To stop widespread evictions and bankruptcies, we are urgently asking you to give main street businesses a lifeline during the implementation of the CECRA program. We are calling on your respective governments to:

- 1. Work together across federal and provincial/territorial levels of government to address the key issue with the CECRA program, which is landlord reluctance to participate in the program.**

- 2. Put in place a temporary moratorium on commercial evictions at the provincial and territorial level for tenants who were in good standing with their landlords prior to March 1, 2020, until improvements to the CECRA program are implemented.**

Please help Canadian main street businesses make it to the other side of COVID-19. Without your immediate intervention, a large segment of the Canadian economy may not survive the crisis.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and for your efforts to fight COVID-19. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

Val Litwin
President and CEO
BC Chamber of Commerce

Ken Kobly
President and CEO
Alberta Chamber of Commerce

Steve McLellan
CEO
Saskatchewan Chamber of
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Chuck Davidson
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Executive Director
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CC: Hon. Sandy Silver, Premier of Yukon
Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Premier of the Northwest Territories
Hon. John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia
Hon. Jason Kenney, Premier of Alberta
Hon. Scott Moe, Premier of Saskatchewan
Hon. Brian Pallister, Premier of Manitoba
Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Hon. Francois Legault, Premier of Quebec
Hon. Blaine Higgs, Premier of New Brunswick
Hon. Stephen McNeil, Premier of Nova Scotia
Hon. Dennis King, Premier of Prince Edward Island
Hon. Dwight Ball, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador