

December 22, 2021

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Re: Supporting small business

Dear Premier Ford,

I am writing on behalf of our 60,000 members and 157 chambers of commerce and boards of trade to request further supports for small business and a long-term plan to improve business confidence.

Newly imposed restrictions intended to control the spread of the Omicron variant have left countless small businesses on the verge of collapse. Nearly two years into this pandemic, it is imperative that any further public health restrictions that inhibit business activity are accompanied by targeted relief and support programs, including loan forgiveness and extensions on payment terms for small businesses. Provincially, many targeted supports ended months ago, and federally, they have been greatly reduced, leaving businesses to fully absorb rising operating expenses, including rent and electricity.

Many businesses have suffered greatly throughout this crisis and continue to face unprecedented cash flow constraints and uncertainty as the impacts of the pandemic continue to hobble the economy. In addition, due to travel restrictions and the prolonged closure of the US-Canada border, tourism has been at an all-time low, disproportionately impacting some sectors and regions of our province. **We, therefore, ask your government to consider further grants, targeted support programs, and other direct measures to support impacted businesses and their workers.**

The rapid rise of Omicron was unexpected as we were all looking forward to Ontario's reopening. As current and future variants will continue to hamper economic activity, we call on the Government of Ontario to reduce uncertainty for business by developing a long-term plan that outlines how the Province intends to respond to the next stages of the pandemic and support those impacted by public health measures. Clarity and transparency on specific metrics that inform the government's decision to impose or ease restrictions are paramount for business confidence and continuity.

No business, region, sector, or demographic should be left behind in the pursuit of economic recovery and growth. Support programs and pro-growth policies should be targeted towards those experiencing the most pronounced challenges. There has been significant public-private collaboration throughout the pandemic and our small business owners need your support now.

Sincerely,



Rocco Rossi
President and CEO
Ontario Chamber of Commerce
