

August 28, 2012



The Honourable Kathleen Wynne
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
17th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2E5

Re: Retail Business Holiday Act

Dear Minister Wynne,

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) is a federation of 160 local chambers of commerce and boards of trade in the Province of Ontario, representing 60,000 businesses of all sizes, in all economic sectors covering every area of the province. The OCC's mandate is to advocate strong and effective policies on issues that affect its membership throughout Ontario's business community.

The OCC is a proponent of fostering a prosperous and healthy Ontario by supporting and encouraging growth of local businesses. The *Retail Business Holiday Act* requires retail businesses operating in Ontario to close on nine specified days each year. The Act provides for certain provincially established exceptions (i.e., store size, nature of retail outlets and proximity to tourist centres), as well as exceptions deemed by municipal and/or regional governments choosing to seek relief from the Act on behalf of local business.

However, experience with the Act across several municipalities shows that the existing legislation leads to an arbitrary and inefficient patch-work of interpretations and applications across the province. The Act unfairly restricts the ability of retail owners not covered by exemptions to compete with those who are, and does not reflect significant changes in retail business models stemming from the onset of e-commerce.

The OCC recently ratified a policy resolution urging the Government of Ontario to review and replace the legislation governing retail business holidays with legislation that provides choice to retailers. The OCC believes giving retail businesses the ability to determine their own operating hours will help foster a more competitive Ontario.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns. If you have questions or comments or would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact Arielle Baltman-Cord at 416.482.5222 ext.2470 or ariellebaltman-cord@occ.on.ca.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Allan O'Dette'.

Allan O'Dette
President & CEO

Cc Honourable Rick Bartolucci, Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Sudbury MPP
Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce

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