

January 7, 2022

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

Dear Premier,

Re: Small Business Support in Essex-Windsor

We are writing to you on behalf of the small businesses in the Essex-Windsor region struggling to keep their doors open in the face of further public health restrictions that continue to increase costs while drastically diminishing the ability to generate revenue. There is a very real risk of widespread closures in a region like ours that is so heavily reliant on cross-border commerce and the tourism and hospitality sector.

We were heartened by your government's announcement Friday that it will provide a \$10,000 grant for eligible businesses subject to closures under the modified Step Two of the Roadmap to Reopen, as well as your commitment to providing electricity-rate relief for businesses and workers and families spending more time at home.

We agree with Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade that "small businesses, job creators and the entrepreneurial spirit are the backbone of Ontario's economy" and encourage you to consider providing additional supports to struggling businesses in Essex-Windsor.

The rise of the Omicron variant has had a devastating impact on local businesses, who were already struggling two years into this pandemic. Not only must these businesses deal with closures, capacity restrictions and the cost of implementing vaccine certificate protocols, but also with members of the public who are reluctant to shop local as they perceive it safer and more convenient to shop online.

Even before Omicron, nearly two-thirds of small businesses across Canada had not seen sales return to normal levels. And, of this group, nearly a quarter report their business may fail within the next six months. The need for significant and immediate financial help is critical.

Small Business Support in Essex-Windsor

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We urge your government to:

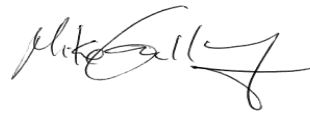
1. Expedite the rollout of the just-announced Ontario Small Business Support Grant and make it easy for small businesses to access.
2. Consider boosting the supports available under that program as well as implementing additional support programs for small business.
3. Provide small businesses immediate access to the government portal for grants and subsidies.
4. Urge the Federal Government to work with the Province to reinstate the commercial rent assistance program
5. Provide financial assistance to businesses to implement new vaccine certificate protocols (implementing new QR code reader, staffing people to check vaccine passports, etc.)

Rapid action and significant support is needed to avoid a wave of small business closures in Essex-Windsor and we urge you to push both privately and publicly for these measures.

Sincerely,



Gary McNamara
Warden



Chief Administrative Officer

Cc; The Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario (doug.fordco@pc.ola.org)
The Hon. Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (vic.fedeli@pc.ola.org)
The Hon. Nina Tangri, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction (nina.tangri@pc.ola.org)
The Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance (peter.bethlenfalvy@pc.ola.org)
Taras Natyshak, MPP, Essex (tnatyshak-q@ndp.on.ca)
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Essex County Local Municipalities (Clerks by email)

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 countyofessex.ca

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City of Windsor (Clerks Office by email)

Rakesh Naidu, CEO, Windsor-Essex Chamber of Commerce

(rnaidu@windsoressexchamber.org)

Gordon Orr, CEO, Tourism Windsor-Essex (gorr@tourismwindsoressex.com)

Michelle E. DiEmanuele, Secretary of the Cabinet (M.DiEmanuele@ontario.ca)

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