



May 13, 2020

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

The Honourable Rod Phillips
Minister of Finance
95 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Y8

RE: Commercial evictions and COVID-19

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Phillips,

Thank you for your government's leadership as we work to slow the spread of COVID-19, and for the collaborative spirit demonstrated in the Province's actions to respond to this public health crisis.

As you know, Ontario businesses have been met with unprecedented challenges in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, including financial pressure and reduced liquidity, labour interruptions and widespread layoffs, and for some, the complete suspension of operations. For small- and medium-sized local businesses, the social and economic impacts have been profound and continue to grow as we move into the third month under a state of emergency.

We are grateful for the collaborative efforts of the provincial and federal governments to provide rent assistance for businesses. Unfortunately, in Guelph, many commercial landlords either do not qualify for, or have opted not to participate in, the recently-announced Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program (OCECRA). As a result, non-essential businesses that have been struggling to meet rent obligations due to loss of revenue now face the imminent threat of being locked out of their storefronts.

On behalf of the Mayor's Task Force on Economic Recovery, and in solidarity with Guelph's vibrant and diverse business community, we ask that our provincial leaders order a temporary ban on commercial evictions for a period of six months.

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A ban on evictions, applied to tenants who were considered to be in good standing as of March 15, will give both businesses and commercial landlords the time needed to resolve rent challenges using the assistance programs now available to them, and will prevent the permanent closure of many of the small businesses upon which Ontario's main streets and local economies are built.

Thank you again for your leadership during this extraordinarily challenging time. You have our full and unreserved support as you work to implement new and stronger measures to protect Ontario businesses on the brink of eviction and permanent closure, and we look forward to working alongside your government as we plan for widespread economic recovery in the months to come.

Thank you,

Cam Guthrie
Mayor of Guelph

Mike Schreiner
Member of Provincial Parliament for Guelph
Province of Ontario

Lloyd Longfield
Member of Parliament for Guelph
Government of Canada

Cc: Shakiba Shayani, Chief Executive Officer
Guelph Chamber of Commerce

Marty Williams, Executive Director
Downtown Guelph Business Association