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*September 27, 2020*

To our provincial leaders,

**Re: Provincial Orders Mandated for Bars and Restaurants Issued September 25th ([O. Reg 364/20](#))**

The Riverside District BIA, Bloorcourt BIA and Queen Street West BIA are three of Toronto's 80+ BIAs. We collectively represent approximately 600 small and medium sized businesses and property owners.

Small and medium sized businesses remain the engine of the Ontario and Canadian economy and while they are instrumental, they remain equally as vulnerable and fragile during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

**We are writing to you today because of the recently amended order [O. Reg 364/20](#). It has limited the hours of alcohol sales and service and is of grave concern to many of our business members who are operators of restaurants, bars, and other food and drink establishments who depend on the hours between 11pm and 2am to keep their doors open.**

We are sharing their concerns regarding this order and the conditions they are now being asked to operate under:

- Bars and restaurants have just recently been allowed to reopen for dine-in service and have hired back staff;
- This order removes operators' most profit generating hours from 11pm to 2am;
- Many patrons will not stop alcohol consumption at 12am, and more unregulated private situations will result;

- Evidence and data has not been presented pointing to the need for this order nor its effectiveness in fighting COVID-19. To quote Restaurants Canada “The source of the spikes that we see is not originating from the local restaurants and bars, it’s originating from private parties”;
- The vast majority of operators are working hard to abide by Public Health regulations to help in the fight against COVID-19 and are now being penalized for the irresponsible actions of a few;
- Reduced hours for bars/restaurants have come at a time when the prime outdoor patio season is coming to a close, many operators have just bought equipment (e.g. patio heaters) to help extend the season;
- Bars and restaurants are facing increasing insurance costs because of COVID just to keep their doors open; Provincial government interventions are needed in this alarming issue. High profile local examples: Hi-Lo Bar on Toronto’s Queen Street East was informed their insurance would jump from [\\$9000 to \\$30,000 due to COVID](#));
- Not enough notice was provided for operators to address staffing changes and other critical components - this has put employees out of work.

In Summary - What is needed:

- Financial Supports are needed when businesses are required to reduce hours or shut down, to ensure they are able to remain solvent and re-open;
- Supportive programs, like Regulation 719 to temporarily allow liquor sales licensees to sell beer, wine and spirits as part of a food order for takeout or delivery, should be extended through 2021.
- Advanced notice of measures affecting businesses: More sufficient time needs to be given when orders are mandated to allow business operators, local and provincial enforcement agencies to sufficiently and responsibly react.
- Immediate Government Action to work with the insurance industry to support small and medium business by preventing astronomical increases in their insurance policies and premiums.

We would welcome and appreciate any further dialogue. Thank you sincerely for your ongoing support of small and medium sized businesses.

On behalf of the Riverside District BIA, Bloorcourt BIA, and Queen Street West BIA:

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