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April 9, 2021

To our provincial leaders,

Re: Urgent Ask for Additional Supports and Clarity for Main Street Businesses

The Riverside District, Queen Street West, Bloorcourt, Leslieville and West Queen West BIAs are five of Toronto's 80+ BIAs. We collectively represent approximately 1300 small and medium sized businesses and property owners. The views expressed in this letter come from our direct consultations with our members.

While we recognize that efforts have been made to support our businesses during the ongoing pandemic, not enough has been done. Our members are looking for outcomes including **more financial support for Toronto-based businesses, policy that is driven by transparent statistics, and clear lines of communication.**

In summary, what is needed:

- **More sustained financial support for Toronto area** businesses who have been on the longest lockdown in North America - with geographic considerations toward fixed costs:
 - Remuneration for sectors that were publicly informed of reopening timeframes and then ordered to abandon reopening plans (including but not limited to health, fitness, beauty, wellness, retail, restaurants, and hospitality)
 - Introducing a sector-specific program for covering reopening and closure costs, such as wasted inventory, staffing costs, etc.
 - Inclusive financial support programs that ensure **all** types of businesses in need are able to participate (i.e. new businesses that have opened during the pandemic, single person businesses).
 - Immediately and permanently cease the 6% markup that restaurants pay for alcohol from the LCBO.
- **Scientific and evidence-based decision-making for policies and regulations:**
 - Transparency is needed with credible facts and sources to identify the reasoning for strong and major business closure actions taken by the provincial government
 - A clear path is needed now for how businesses can plan for re-opening for the remainder of 2021, following the current stay-at-home/ lockdown order, aligned with statistics, clearly associated KPIs (e.g. based on case counts, vaccination rates)

- **Clear lines of communication**

- Outline a clear plan for how lockdown measures will be eased to avoid any further unnecessary costs for reopening and closing of businesses. News releases must immediately come with updated detailed regulations and orders.
- Create a reasonable and clear set of rules for vaccinated people to remove uncertainty for our public-facing main street businesses

Due to the financial devastation that has been produced by the actions provincial government measures have been enacted to date, some businesses are taking risks under the strain they are experiencing. The only way to navigate past this reality is to directly address their concerns transparently on a financial, mental and emotional level.

We are already losing the character of our neighbourhoods and the social and economic diversity in all sectors of industry. The measures we have outlined are what business leaders need to see now to prevent decimation of our main streets.

On behalf all of the BIAs mentioned above,

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