

March 25, 2020

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Hon. Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Correspondence Services Unit,
Whitney Block, Room 4620, 99 Wellesley St. W.
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Ford:

Re: Advice on support for business community during COVID-19

We are writing to you jointly as the heads of the leading business organizations in Waterloo Region.

The Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, Communitech Corporation, Waterloo Economic Development Corporation, and the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce together represent over 90,000 workers and 3,500 businesses of every type and size across Waterloo Region. Our members include advanced manufacturers, innovators, technology companies, major financial services firms, agriculture businesses, and small professional services businesses.

On behalf of these member companies, we are reaching out to thank you for your decisive action to date to contain the spread of COVID-19, and to **clearly articulate the nature of business support required** to protect businesses and the broader economy until it is safe to 'unfreeze' Canada's economy once COVID-19 is contained.

The Situation

Your governments have reacted quickly and with whole-of-government approaches to dealing with the risks and consequences of COVID-19

While other governments around the world either resisted the science or lacked political will to act, your governments took swift action - in coordination with one another - and we commend you for it.

The science is clear that decisive, large-scale action is the only way to contain the human costs of COVID-19. We, and like minded organizations across Canada, believe the same is true for our economy.

We respectfully advise and request that the Governments of Canada and Ontario unleash unprecedented fiscal firepower to combat the economic danger posed by COVID-19.

Our Proposal

To prevent massive job loss and the dissolution of supply chains, we advise and request the following steps:

1. **Subsidize wages to protect jobs, based on the model established in the United Kingdom.** With this support, our fundamentally healthy economy will remain intact while frozen, until it is safe to thaw and restore full economic activity. Without it, job loss and supply chain deterioration will take many years to heal.
2. **Backstop Canadian banks** to enable them to extend zero- or low-interest loans repayable over a lengthy period of time to small and medium-sized businesses.
3. **Postpone upcoming HST/GST remittance payment.** This will allow businesses to utilize these funds for cash flow and allow for maintenance levels for their business operations.
4. **Defer mortgage and rent payments** for individuals and businesses while business operators have limited or no cash flow. You have taken a clear direction in this regard and we applaud you for it.
5. **Support the charitable and not for profit sector** through direct liquidity support and allowing capital-gains-exempt donation of shares to charitable organizations. Many of these organizations are providing front line services and programs for the most vulnerable in our communities. We further recommend utilizing a matching program such as ones that has been used after natural disasters like the Tsunami of 2004.
6. **Protect residential and business property taxpayers** by passing provincial legislation permitting deferred payments. Legislation is required given that municipal deficits are not currently permitted.

Thank you for considering our advice and request for swift, scaled, powerful fiscal policy action to sustain Canada's economy through a time of extraordinary challenge. **Should you choose such a course of action, count on our vocal and sustained support and partnership throughout.** We will stand with you during and after this action, and make it clear to the public that these extraordinary measures were prudent, wise, and fully required.

Please reach out at any time or for any reason whenever we can be of assistance to you and your teams.

Sincerely,



Tony LaMantia
President and CEO
WREDC



Greg Durocher
President and CEO
CCC



Iain Klugman
President and CEO
Communitech



Ian McLean
President and CEO
GKWCC

Cc

Hon. Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance (Canada)

Hon. Rod Philips, Minister of Finance (Ontario)