



April 29, 2020

Premier Douglas Ford
Ministers and MPPs
Province of Ontario
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario

Dear Premier Ford:

It is with earnest that we pen this letter on behalf of our members and the challenges that they are facing as a result of the Covid-19 virus. The measures that have been put in place to assist the many people, agencies and businesses have been unparalleled. The non-partisan collaboration that has taken place among the Provinces and the Federal government has been exemplary in demonstrating the need that we must all work together to conquer this pandemic. We commend the position the Province has taken to ensure the safety of all of its citizens. We also understand that there is no easy fix and that existing supports that have been rolled out may need to be enhanced or even overhauled. It is a landscape that changes daily.

The Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA) has been working in collaboration with our counterparts from across Ontario and the country to bring forward the on-the-street impacts of the smaller and medium-sized mainstreet businesses that were the first to shut down their businesses in response to Public Health directives to fight Covid-19.

The recent announcement for Commercial Rent relief (O-CECRA) has, while well-intentioned, left a gap in protecting small businesses from impending demands from landlords whose eviction notices are being posted on business doors everyday. Many landlords either don't qualify due to the program constraints, or have opted to not use this program and simply demand full rent from businesses that have been shut down with no opportunity to generate revenue. We are imploring the Provincial government to step forward, once again, to protect these businesses through a passing legislation for a **moratorium on commercial evictions for a minimum of six months**. (to be applied to tenants who were in good standing as of March 15). It will be a step that will encourage landlords to come to the table with their tenants and work through the offerings that have been made available to them to offset their losses and create and more conducive environment to resolve rent challenges with their tenants.

As we look to the future and economic recovery the one refrain we hear is 'what will our cities look like? The mainstreets and commercial neighbourhoods of our city are what create the vibe to draw people to our cities. Their diversity and offerings are what tourists seek, they are the qualities that employers look for when setting up a new business, they are the places where people choose to live. Their survival is critical to our economic recovery.

Please act now to protect our businesses from disappearing from the economic landscape and ensure that the Province's resurgence will include these vital municipal assets.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Kaluski', written over a faint dotted line.

Mark Kaluski, Chair
Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA)
www.ocobia.org