



Open letter to Premier Ford from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association, Restaurants Canada, and Retail Council of Canada

May 25, 2020

The Honourable Doug Ford, MPP
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Bldg., Rm 281, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A1

Urgent: Moratorium on commercial tenant evictions

Dear Premier:

With June 1st only days away, pressure is once again mounting for our small- and medium-sized business members to make their rent payments. Business owners have been telling us that they are stressed about being evicted and urgently need your help.

We appreciate that your government is facing many unexpected challenges during this health and economic crisis of unprecedented proportions. Statistics Canada's April 2020 jobs report alone shows the extent of COVID-19's economic destruction in Ontario to date on sectors such as accommodation, food services, wholesale and/or retail trade.

Businesses across the province were heartened by the announcement of a federal-provincial program to provide much-needed rent relief. However, since the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program was announced, we have been hearing from numerous small- and medium-sized businesses that many improvements are desperately needed to make it work. Even though the program just officially started, we already know from our members that many landlords will not apply, meaning that their tenants will not be able to access the program and the commercial tenant eviction protection it includes. To make matters worse, it is extremely easy for a landlord to evict a commercial tenant in Ontario.

Businesses that were forced to close entirely by government order to help stop the spread of COVID-19 have been generating zero revenues. Businesses like restaurants or retailers in malls that were forced to restrict their operations by government order have seen unsustainable revenue declines. And once the businesses that have managed to survive are allowed to fully open, it will take time to get to the new normal, regardless of Ontario's reopening timelines. In the meantime, bills like rent payments will continue to pile up, and evictions will become the norm.

That is why we are urgently asking you to protect small- and medium-sized businesses from evictions by taking the following action:

- **Put in place temporary commercial eviction protection for tenants who were in good standing with their landlords prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Please help our business members make it to the other side of COVID-19. Without your immediate assistance, more businesses will be forced to close. In the absence of sufficient support, a large portion of the economy and the jobs created by our hard-working members will disappear forever.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We appreciate your continued collaboration with Ontario's business community, and your leadership and efforts to fight COVID-19. We look forward to your timely response and remain ready to work with you and your government to make Ontario open for business again.

Sincerely,

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cc: Hon. Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance
Hon. Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Hon. Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction