

August 19, 2020

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland  
Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Dear Deputy Premier Minister Freeland,

On behalf of Retail Council of Canada (RCC) and all of our members, we would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister of Finance. With your extensive experience, we are sure that you will bring depth and expertise to your new role, and that Canada will be well-served.

As a not-for-profit, industry-funded association, RCC represents over 45,000 online and brick-and-mortar retail establishments from coast to coast in general merchandise, pharmacy, and grocery. Retail is Canada's largest private-sector employer and holds a critical role in our economy. The sector has a significant impact on jobs in warehousing, transportation, IT and commercial property management. In fact, every retail job creates four supporting jobs in these and other sectors. In February 2020, 2,226,000 Canadians worked in the retail industry, but by May there were nearly 390,000 fewer retail jobs, a loss of 17% due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Although there are signs of hope as the economy slowly reopens, the road to recovery for retailers will be long and hard. RCC recently submitted pre-budget recommendations - we have attached our submission to this letter for your review. As we all work through the long-term impacts brought on by COVID-19, we believe that the five key retail measures we put forward will help ensure the recovery of Canada's retail industry, boosting Canada's economic growth and making life more affordable for Canadian families:

- 1. Introduce tax credits for enhanced safety measures**
  - 2. Eliminate tariffs on essential items**
  - 3. Support consistent and accurate health messaging for consumers**
  - 4. Reduce credit card swipe fees**
  - 5. Introduce a new Visitor Rebate Program**
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RCC appreciates our open and constructive working relationship with your government and we look forward to working with you to assist in supporting Canada's economic recovery. We are at your disposal and will be pleased to provide insights regarding our sector, including the challenges and opportunities it faces in the months and years to come. We hope to have the opportunity of meeting you soon and look forward to working with you and your staff.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diane J. Brisebois". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Diane" being the most prominent part.

Diane J. Brisebois  
President and CEO, Retail Council of Canada