

March 28, 2024

His Worship, Adam Lordon
Mayor of Miramichi
Miramichi, NB
Email: adam.lordon@miramichi.org

Mayor Lordon:

On behalf of the many Retail Council of Canada (RCC) members who conduct business and provide employment in Miramichi, I am writing to ask Miramichi Council to amend Bylaw 74 and allow retailers to determine Sunday opening hours that work best for their business.

As you may know, retail is the largest private sector employer in New Brunswick and in Canada. RCC members contribute greatly to community and to the economy in towns and cities all across New Brunswick. Due to constantly changing lifestyles and work hours, retail has also been forced to change in response to customer demand for more flexibility in retail hours of operation. Over the past generation, governments throughout Canada have responded by allowing retailers greater choice of when they wish to be open for business. Change came more slowly in New Brunswick but over the past decade, the vast majority of municipal governments in the province made similar bylaw changes to allow retailers to choose their Sunday hours of operation. Although most of these bylaw changes came to New Brunswick in the mid-2010s, February 2024 saw the Town of Woodstock, New Brunswick finally pass its bylaw to allow this retailer choice. Given this decision, the City of Miramichi and region of Tantramar are now the only governments with a notable retail presence that still limit the ability of a retailer to choose the Sunday opening hours that work best for their business.

RCC recognizes that bylaw 74 was amended in 2005 to allow some ability for retailers to serve their customers on Sundays. Although this change was appreciated, the City of Miramichi seemingly did not fully understand the modern pressures facing a retail business. Whether doing business in an urban environment or a small town, the modern-day New Brunswick retailer does not simply compete with the retailers down the street or across town. Today's New Brunswick retailer faces fierce, direct competition from retailers in neighbouring provinces and from e-retailers from around the world. These massive e-retailers are open for business twenty-four hours a day and thus, are always ready to process and ship orders placed by busy residents of communities like Douglastown, Chatham and Newcastle, New Brunswick. Competition from these e-retailers has only increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. In trying to compete, New Brunswick retailers understand the importance being open for business during times that work best for their customers.

Successful retailers are constantly tweaking their business practices to achieve the delicate balance between responding to customer demand, while being financially responsible and realistic. The government decisions on Sunday opening hours in every other part of New Brunswick and in neighbouring provinces have increased a retailer's ability to achieve this delicate balance by opening during Sunday hours that are best for their business. In providing this choice, some retailers have decided to open for extended Sunday hours, some have chosen

limited hours of operation (e.g.: Sunday morning) while others have decided not to open for business on Sundays. In the years since the Sunday opening hour restrictions were lifted, some retailers have told RCC that their business has benefitted from this change while others have been less enthusiastic. Regardless of the success and challenges resulting from the operational decisions made at the store level, retailers appreciate the opportunity to make that choice based on what they feel is best for their business and their employees.

It is our hope that Miramichi Council will understand that its mandates regarding Sunday opening hours do not reflect the societal realities of 21st century society. RCC asks that Miramichi Council amend its bylaw and make the business-friendly decision to support retailer choice in allowing retailers to open on Sundays during hours that work best for their business.

I thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Jim Cormier
Director (Atlantic)
Retail Council of Canada

cc: RCC members who do business and employ people in Miramichi, New Brunswick

Michael Noel, City Manager
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