

Mayor Fred Eisenberger

**Hamilton City Hall
2nd floor - 71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5**

Dear Mayor Fred Eisenberger,

I'm writing to you today in my capacity as a Canadian citizen, a member of my community, and a music lover. When COVID-19 hit, live music venues across the country were forced to shut their doors. They were the first to close, and they will be the last to re-open. Unless financial assistance from the federal government is made available immediately, most (a staggering 96%!) might not survive the shutdown, and the music will fall silent. The situation is dire.

We've all come together for the common good to stop the spread, but as the months go by, the country's independent music venues — small businesses that sustain and support an industry and provide a stage for live music — remain on life support. Small venues play a crucial role in the development and sustainability of every artist's career. Without the support that they provide, Canadian artists whose names and music we have come to know and love would never have made it out of their basements. Unless urgent action is taken, the entire musical economy could be wiped out. This includes venues, musicians, managers, production crews, bartenders and wait staff, suppliers, tour managers, drivers, agents, caterers, cleaners... an entire ecosystem of interdependent stakeholders, not to mention audiences!

Beyond the joy and meaning that these beloved institutions bring to our lives, independent music venues exist within a larger ecosystem. They are economic multipliers and community builders. It is said that every dollar spent in a small music venue generates twelve dollars of economic activity in the surrounding neighbourhood — in restaurants, hotels, retail shops, transit... and the list goes on. That level of financial contribution is consistent in cities and towns across Canada. What would our communities look like without them? We must ensure their survival, and so we look to you.

Independent venues — those small to mid-scale rooms where local bands build a following, where touring acts earn their keep, and where stars are born — this sub-sector of the larger music industry is its very foundation. It's a delicate balance. A venue closes here, and venue closes there, and before you know it, the whole thing starts to crumble and fall. No more local heroes, no more favourite artists criss-crossing the country, connecting with their fans...

The future remains uncertain at best. Many independent venues find themselves ineligible for programs designed to provide financial relief, and yet they continue to face mounting fixed costs and zero revenues, with no end in sight. I stand with the Canadian Live Music Association (CLMA) and the Canadian Independent Venue Coalition (CIVC) in their collective efforts to protect independent venues in this time of existential crisis. The federal government must step up to assist Canadian independent venues as they weather this

collective efforts to protect independent venues in this time of existential crisis. The federal government must step up to assist Canadian independent venues as they weather this crisis, and provide the kind of enduring support that will help sustain them down the long road to economic recovery, as we reimagine new ways to gather. And as we wait this pandemic out, let's plan for the future; this time-out could be an opportunity to reimagine the live music sector, and to create a more sustainable music economy.

I thank you for your time, wish you well in your deliberations, and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Goulet

