

Associate Minister of Small Business and
Red Tape Reduction
Ministry of Economic Development,
Job Creation and Trade

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Ministre associé aux Petites Entreprises
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Ontario

December 14, 2020

Ms. Rachel Braithwaite
Executive Director
Barton Village BIA
102-659 Barton Street East
Hamilton, Ontario
L8L 3A3
info@bartonvillage.ca

Dear Ms. Braithwaite:

Thank you for writing to share your feedback regarding the recent measures Ontario has taken to stop the spread of COVID-19. We recognize the devastating impact COVID-19 is having on Ontario's small businesses and we greatly appreciate all the support from businesses that are helping us contain the spread of COVID-19 to ensure the health and safety of all Ontarians.

In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, local medical officers of health, and other health experts, the province has made the difficult, but necessary decision to move certain public health unit regions to new levels in the [Keeping Ontario Safe and Open Framework](#). These necessary measures are being taken to limit community transmission of COVID-19 in order to keep schools open, safeguard health system capacity, and protect the province's most vulnerable populations.

Since first learning of COVID-19, our government has taken significant steps to help businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19. Ontario's *2020 Budget* sets out a total of \$45 billion in support over three years to make available the necessary health resources to continue protecting people, deliver critical programs and tax measures to support individuals, families and job creators impacted by the virus, and lay the groundwork for a robust long-term economic recovery for the province.

Measures to support businesses include:

- Putting in place a temporary moratorium on commercial evictions
- Making \$60 million available for a \$1,000 grant for small businesses to offset the cost of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- A temporary \$600 million rebate program to support eligible businesses required to close or significantly restrict services in areas subject to public health restrictions.

- Investments of over \$680 million over the next four years in broadband infrastructure;
- Electricity cost relief for industrial and commercial employers: saving medium-size and larger industrial and commercial employers about 14 and 16 per cent respectively, on average, on their electricity bills;
- Lowering Business Education Tax (BET) rates for 94 per cent of all business properties in Ontario;
- Providing municipalities with property tax relief for small businesses;
- Proposing to make permanent the Employer Health Tax (EHT) exemption increase from \$490,000 to \$1 million.

Moving forward, we will continue to explore new ways to help small businesses through these difficult times. We encourage small businesses to visit [ontario.ca/smallbusiness](https://www.ontario.ca/smallbusiness) to learn about other supports for them, including:

- The [Workplace PPE Supplier Directory](#), which provides businesses an up-to-date list of Ontario companies and business associations that are ready to supply personal protective equipment
- \$2,500 grants to develop or improve their online presence through Digital Main Street
- Local advice through Ontario's Small Business COVID-19 Recovery Network where small businesses can access tailored advice on local, provincial and federal programs
- Sector-specific resources to help prevent COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Mental health and addictions supports
- Free, tailored financial advice and online training to help businesses make informed financial decisions and navigate the unprecedented economic circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic

As COVID-19 evolves, our response will evolve with it. What will not change, however, is our commitment to small business recovery and future success.

Thank you once again for sharing your feedback and recommendations. For more information regarding Ontario's COVID-19 Response Framework, we encourage you to [contact the Ministry of Health](#). To learn more about the COVID-19 Business Support Grants, please visit: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/businesses-get-help-covid-19-costs>

Sincerely,



Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction

c: The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
His Worship Fred Eisenberger, Mayor, City of Hamilton
Andrea Horwath, MPP, Hamilton Centre