



December 21, 2020

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1A2

Dear Premier Ford,

Re: Lockdown Measures in Ottawa

We are writing to implore you to remove the random and broad-based lockdown of local business from your COVID counter measure toolkit. This strategy has not proven to be an effective way to reduce the risk of transmission while the resulting harm to public health from an economic and mental well-being perspective continues to increase exponentially, causing long term negative outcomes. In addition, the provincial framework presented after the lockdown in the fall was designed to give each community the opportunity to drive their own destiny. We in Ottawa, took your word on that. In Ottawa, we have 32 new cases today, 18 in hospital and zero in ICU. We are clearly in the orange-restrict phase and maintaining that status. We fear that bearing the brunt of the province wide increase in numbers will decrease our community commitment to the framework and adherence to public health recommendations, thereby further exposing us to the risk of over burdening our health care system.

The source of transmission has been repeatedly identified as personal, social settings – not business-related situations. Further, the essential businesses allowed to remain open often sell non-essential items in direct competition to local businesses that have been forced to shut down. These policy decisions are directly shaping the future of our economic landscape. It is unfair, unfounded, and undemocratic.

We appreciate your position in the face of rising cases and potential additional strands. Please consider, remaining true to the framework you created, honing your enforcement to the identified high-risk areas of activity, and making evidence based and clearly communicated decisions that the public can willingly support. In addition, focus your resources on rapid testing, contact tracing and increasing our capacity to treat those affected. We need the cooperation of everyone to combat this pandemic and they need a clear understanding of why we are choosing to close businesses.

In summary, we are respectfully requesting you reconsider the 28-day lockdown in Ottawa and give us the opportunity to continue to lead and work with you in this fight against COVID. We remain in your service.

Sincerely,



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Chair
Ottawa Coalition of BIAs

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