



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Brad Vis

Member of Parliament
Mission–Matsqui–Fraser Canyon

Dear Chamber of Commerce Members:

As business owners I want to thank you for all your efforts protecting the health and safety of workers and maintaining essential services to support the needs of Canadians during this extremely difficult time.

We recognize the massive impact COVID-19 is having on businesses and the sudden and hard decisions business owners were not planning to make this spring. As Deputy Shadow Minister for Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), I continue to advocate for stronger support for businesses and their employees in this time of crisis. I am especially focused on ensuring the Government of Canada provide necessary programs and information transparently to all those impacted. Program details and eligibility requirements continue to change on a daily, if not hourly, basis, so please visit federal government websites for the most up-to-date information before making decisions that will affect your business.

There are new measures available for income support to all Canadians regardless of whether you qualify for Employment Insurance (EI) through the new Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). This Benefit offers \$2000 per month for up to 4 months for those that have lost their income due to COVID-19. CERB is a special measure that provides income support to those who otherwise don't qualify for EI, such as business owners, self-employed, and part-time workers.

Please note that employees who are no longer receiving pay, do not have to be laid-off to claim this benefit, allowing businesses to retain their staff and certainty of workers when COVID-19 measures are lifted. Applications will be accepted through an online portal available on April 6, 2020.

Economic stimulus measures are in place to assist businesses facing hardship. The Government established a Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP) that will provide approximately \$10 billion in additional support to Canadian businesses through the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) and Export Development Canada (EDC). Small business loans are available with delayed repayment, financing to address purchase orders and cash flow gaps.

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On March 27, several additional supports for Canadian businesses were announced, including the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA). The CEBA's stated purpose is to provide eligible small and medium size enterprises (SME) up to \$40,000 in credit available through their existing financial institutions, fully guaranteed and funded by the Government of Canada.

Also on March 27, the previously announced 10% temporary wage subsidy for qualifying businesses was increased to 75% for up to 3 months, retroactive to March 15, 2020. Eligible employers include small businesses, non-profit organizations, and charities. This is intended to help businesses keep and return workers to the payroll. More details on eligibility criteria will start with the impact of COVID-19 on sales, and we are told these will be shared before the end of the March.

The Official Opposition has been calling on the Government to significantly increase the temporary wage subsidy to protect workers since March 21. We are encouraged to see them take our advice. However, there are two more recommendations we have made that the Government must implement:

- Refunding all GST remittances to the small businesses that collected them in at least the last six months.
- Backstopping banks that extend low interest loans to small businesses.

My staff and I are also paying close attention to the AgriStability, AgriInvest and AgriRecovery programs which must ramp up to support our agricultural sector. And we continue to work to ensure that Canadians abroad receive the requisite consular support to come home as quickly as possible.

These are extraordinary times and the growing anxiety of Canadians is real and understandable. For all the latest updates on COVID-19, including economic support, please go to www.canada.ca. To receive my COVID-19 email updates, please sign up at www.bradvis.ca.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call my office at 604-814-5710. My staff and I are doing everything in our power to see these benefits reach Canadians as quickly as possible. My objective is to ensure that all of my constituents receive what is available to them, that I work constructively with the Government to support you during this unprecedented period in the history of our nation, and that the Government is held accountable to make the best possible choices for us all.

Sincerely,



Brad Vis, M.P.
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