

March 19, 2020

Right Honourable Justin Trudeau,  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Honourable Bill Morneau,  
Minister of Finance  
Department of Finance Canada  
90 Elgin Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G5

Honourable Mona Fortier  
Minister of Middle Class Prosperity  
Department of Finance Canada  
90 Elgin Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G5

**Re: Follow up request for federal help for business in response to COVID-19**

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau, Minister Morneau and Minister Fortier,

On behalf of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, along with our community partners at Destination Greater Victoria and the Downtown Victoria Business Association, thank you for your work so far to help provide financial supports for businesses affected by COVID-19. The federal government's deferral of income tax payments until after August 31 will help Canadians facing uncertain economic times. The temporary wage subsidy of ten percent up to a maximum of \$25,000 for small business, non-profits and charities will help them keep employees longer. And the changes to Employment Insurance will help employees, which in turn will ease some of the burden for employers.

As you know, many businesses in our region are struggling to survive the profound loss of revenue in the tourism and hospitality sector caused by government restrictions on travel, exacerbated by requirements for social distancing and self-isolation. Restaurant revenue is now down almost 100 percent, for example.

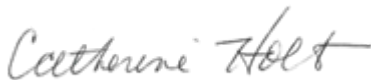
In the interest of keeping more businesses financially viable and able to contribute to economic recovery we sent the attached letter on March 16 and we now have the following urgent requests.

Businesses are having mounting difficulty finding the financial and staff resources to meet their federal tax filing and payment requirements. Flexibility, as you granted on corporate income tax payments, allows more money to be kept in the business during this crisis and more time to meet these requirements. This can be the difference between survival and not for many businesses.

1. **The corporate income tax deferral needs to be extended to GST and payroll tax** to help businesses maintain liquidity.
2. **Penalties for late payroll instalments need to be waived.** This penalty is 25% of the amount owing and for wages paid in March the instalment is typically due by April 15, 2020. Many will not have funds to do this, and the penalties will add significantly to their pain.
3. **Refund cheques need to be prioritized.** CRA typically takes a long time to send refunds. Clients with funds owing to them need those funds immediately. The CRA must prioritize refunds rather than those who owe.

Finally, we reiterate **the urgent need for no-interest survival loans for businesses in our tourism and hospitality industry right now and a generous investment in recovery measures** as soon as we are actually in recovery.

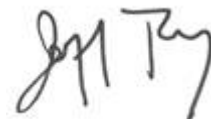
Sincerely,



Catherine Holt  
CEO,  
Greater Victoria  
Chamber of Commerce



Paul Nursey  
CEO,  
Destination  
Greater Victoria



Jeff Bray,  
Executive Director,  
Downtown Victoria  
Business Association

Attachment: Letter-requesting-help-for-business-COVID-March16-2020

March 16, 2020

Right Honourable Justin Trudeau,  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Honourable Bill Morneau,  
Minister of Finance  
Department of Finance Canada  
90 Elgin Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G5

Honourable John Horgan  
Office of the Premier  
West Annex Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Honourable Carole James  
Minister of Finance  
Room 153 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC, V8V 1X4

**Re: Urgent request for immediate relief for business from late filing penalties and instalment interest on taxes and through interest-free BDC loans**

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau, Minister Morneau, Premier Horgan and Minister James,

The Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, along with our community partners at Destination Greater Victoria and the Downtown Victoria Business Association, urge all levels of government to provide immediate relief for businesses suffering economic consequences due to the public health measures instituted by government to combat COVID 19.

Specifically, **we ask that all governments not charge late filing penalties and instalment interest on balances owing to government from today until COVID-19 is under control.** Many businesses are struggling to survive the profound loss of revenue caused by requirements for social isolation and restrictions placed on travel.

Governments can help businesses facing financial uncertainty and severe cash flow reduction by being flexible regarding the timing of, and consequences for, payment of taxes and through access to interest-free loans.

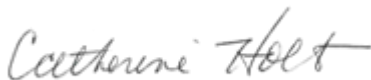
For the federal government, this includes **payroll instalments, GST and corporate income taxes**. Payroll being the most onerous of these.

For British Columbia, this includes **Employer Health Tax, PST and WCB premiums**. We also ask the province to remove the requirement for BC municipalities to charge 10 percent on the late payment of **property taxes**.

Additionally, we request that Canada provide **immediate access to interest-free loans to business through the Business Development Bank of Canada**.

Please help businesses survive this extreme situation.

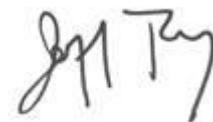
Sincerely,



Catherine Holt  
CEO,  
Greater Victoria  
Chamber of Commerce



Paul Nursey  
CEO,  
Destination  
Greater Victoria



Jeff Bray,  
Executive Director,  
Downtown Victoria  
Business Association