



Friday May 8, 2020

Hon. Rod Phillips
Ministry Office, Ministry of Finance
Frost Building South, 7th Floor
7 Queen's Park Cres.
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1Y7

Dear Minister Phillips,

I write to you today on behalf of the Oakville Economic Task Force. The Task Force – comprising the Town of Oakville's Economic Development Department, the Oakville Chamber of Commerce, Oakville Business Improvement Associations, and myself – continues to engage our business community to understand what support is needed to ensure local businesses are able to survive this period of uncertainty and are in a position to play a role in the recovery of our local economy.

The Task Force is encouraged by the cooperation between the Federal and Provincial government to develop the Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program. While we recognize rent is a provincial concern and we are grateful for the federal government partnering with provinces, it is important to keep in mind that in order to work the program needs to address certain points that both levels of government need to be aware of in order to collaborate successfully, such as:

- Many landlords have declined to apply and others face the onerous process of having to apply for each commercial unit where they own many
- Many tenants cannot benefit from the program or qualify and are facing eviction.

We appreciate the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation indicating that they will address the issue of landlords with no mortgages "in the near future" but some tenants facing eviction do not have very much time to wait for a new program.

The feedback we are hearing from the local business community indicates that, based on the current program details, there are many businesses who will be unable to benefit from the program as-is and will face eviction. Therefore, we are proposing the following changes to the program:

1. Suspend evictions of commercial tenants for a minimum of 6 months



2. Allow tenants to make an application for the rent assistance if the property owner does not want to apply or is ineligible
3. Allow property owners to make one application for all of their properties rather than individual applications
4. Lower the 70% revenue decline threshold for tenants

I urge to you consider these proposed changes as you develop and roll out the program details. Without changes, an increasingly large number of small businesses will be put in a position where they may be faced with permanent closure.

We look forward to continuing to work together with you in supporting the Oakville business community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Burton".

Mayor Rob Burton
Oakville Economic Task Force