

June 22, 2020

Honourable Harry Bains,
Minister of Labour
Room 342 Parliament Buildings.
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

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

Honourable Carole James
Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier
MLA, Victoria-Beacon Hill
Room 153 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Re: Request for exemption to temporary layoff time-limit

Dear Minister Bains, Minister James and Premier Horgan,

The Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce shares the concerns of business organizations across BC, and we call on the provincial government to extend the temporary layoff time limit until at least August 31. Failing to do so creates a cliff in early July for many businesses who have not been able to restart or who are struggling to survive on a portion of their typical revenue.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a tremendous amount of uncertainty for business in our region. The Chamber is grateful that you previously extended the 13-week period to 16 weeks, saving innumerable employers from being forced to terminate staff and pay severance as they struggle to maintain their businesses. But we need more time.

COVID-19 caught everyone off guard, and many businesses do not have cash in hand to cover this potentially crippling expense. Forcing employers to cover unexpected severance costs could push businesses to overextend, resulting in insolvency, bankruptcy or shutting down for good.

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Businesses are doing everything they can to survive this crisis to eventually re-hire staff and fully contribute to the re-opening of BC's economy. We need you to use the tools available and help businesses hold on a little longer so we can get through this together.

We ask you to continue showing leadership in managing the economic impact of COVID-19 by extending this temporary layoff time limit.

Respectfully

Bruce Williams
CEO,
Greater Victoria
Chamber of Commerce

John Wilson
Board Chair
Greater Victoria Chamber of
Commerce