



November 2017

Ontario Government introducing new initiatives to help small businesses lower costs!

Dear Friends,

I am writing to share with you information about new initiatives that Ontario government is introducing to help small businesses lower costs, create opportunities, and modernize their relationship with government.

The success of small businesses in Ontario is critical. With more than 400,000 small businesses in communities across the province, we know that when they succeed, we all succeed. While our economy is strong and unemployment is at an all-time low, we know not everyone is feeling the benefit of this. Our small businesses are the backbone of communities everywhere, providing good jobs for families, which is why our government is committed to their success and growth. That is why we chose to focus our efforts on ensuring that we create the conditions for small businesses to succeed, while bringing everyone forward.

As such, through the Fall Economic Statement, we are investing an additional \$500 million to help small businesses lower costs, take advantage of new opportunities, and save time when dealing with government. Some of the specific measures announced are:

- Cutting the small business tax rate by one per cent, to 3.5%, effective January 1, 2018 — saving small businesses \$250 million over the next three years.
- Introducing new supports for small businesses to create jobs for young people by investing approximately \$124M for employers to hire and retain youth aged 15 to 29 years. Through the Employment Service and Youth Job Connection, employers would receive \$1,000 to hire and \$1,000 to retain youth beginning January 1, 2018.
- Modernizing the apprenticeship system in Ontario by adding five new trades to our apprenticeship support programs: Hairstylist, Cook, Horticultural Technician, Baker/Pâtissier, and Appliance Service Technician.
- Creating a new Main Street Enhancement Fund — a \$40 million investment in small businesses in downtown and main street areas, which will support:
 - Planning and promotional activities for downtown and main street areas.
 - Implementation of Community Improvement Plans.
 - Enhanced digital capabilities for small businesses.
 - Energy audits to save small businesses money.
- Launching the Small Business Access Service, a “one window service” that will provide resources online and over the phone to make it easier for small businesses to interact with the government and get the supports they need.

- Designating 33% of Ontario government procurement spending to small and medium-sized businesses by 2020, which will be supported by initiatives to improve the process, making it easier for businesses to submit bids.
- Developing a Coordinated Inspection Pilot for the restaurants and bars sector, that will help focus inspections on non-compliant businesses, while reducing inspections for compliant businesses in the sector.

The initiatives we have put forward through the Fall Economic Statement are just a few of the new measures that have been developed based on the recommendations from small businesses and groups like the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Retail Council of Canada.

It is important to note that these new initiatives are in addition to WSIB's reduction of average premium rates and 25% reduction in electricity bills to approximately half a million eligible small businesses and farms across Ontario.

I understand that small businesses are not easy to run, and there are anxieties, which is why we are listening and taking action. What I have heard from small business owners in our community is that the challenges faced are broader than just the bottom line — especially when it comes to barriers in helping youth find meaningful employment and develop the job-ready skills and experience small businesses need. These new initiatives are meant to help in easing some of the pressures faced by small businesses.

To read the 2017 Fall Economic Statement, visit www.ontario.ca/page/economic-outlook-and-fiscal-review-2017.

If you need more information, please do not hesitate to contact me at my Community Office at 613-722-6414 or via email at ynaqvi.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org.

Sincerely,

Yasir

Yasir Naqvi, MPP
Ottawa Centre