



April 14, 2020  
Hon. Mary Wilson  
Minister of Economic Development and Small Business  
Province of New Brunswick

Dear Mary,

We hope you were able to take a few hours for yourself and your family on the long weekend. We all continue – both in our Chamber networks and in government – to devote our time to helping citizens and businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is important to pause once in a while to recharge and refocus.

Our three Chambers continue to talk regularly with our members. As the economic crisis brought on by the pandemic reaches the one-month mark, concerns about sustaining their business are mounting daily for owner/operators. As we indicated in our March 31 letter advocating for commercial rent deferral, we remain appreciative of the programs and support announced to date at both the provincial and federal levels.

However, at this point, our province's business community needs additional support to survive.

The various federal and provincial programs that provide income replacement and support to employees, such as the CERB, EI program changes and the \$900 emergency income support by your government, are now resulting in cash in the pockets of those in need. Business owners, however, tell us they desperately need more assistance to cover fixed costs.

We renew our call for commercial rent deferral, but even that measure may fall short of what is needed by the majority of business tenants, who are increasingly saying: 'Deferral is fine, but it just postpones the debt burden we will face.'

With that in mind, we echo these measures also proposed by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which we believe are now necessary to ensure the maximum number of New Brunswick businesses can keep their doors open in the long-term:

- A commercial rent subsidy program where businesses receive a grant, a percentage of their rent up to a monthly maximum;
- A reduction in commercial property tax for 2020 of 25%;

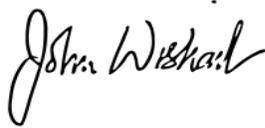
Our discussions with the nearly 3,000 business owners we represent have taken a more urgent tone in recent days. As each day passes, more business owners are moved to consider what was once unthinkable: closing their business permanently.

The time has come for the next phase of both federal and provincial assistance. We have shared these recommendations with federal officials. Perhaps there is an opportunity for the federal and provincial government to partner on this next phase of business fixed cost relief.

We appreciate your time to consider these recommendations and remain available, as always, to assist in creating and promoting any programs that may help New Brunswick businesses survive COVID-19 and flourish well into the future.

Stay Safe.

Sincerely,



John Wishart  
CEO  
Chamber of Commerce  
For Greater Moncton



Krista Ross  
CEO  
Fredericton  
Chamber of Commerce



David Duplisea  
CEO  
Saint John Region  
Chamber of Commerce

CC: Premier Blaine Higgs  
Finance Minister Ernie Steeves  
Service NB Minister Sherry Wilson  
Liberal Leader Kevin Vickers  
Green Party Leader David Coon  
Peoples Alliance Party Leader Kris Austin