



Via Email

January 13, 2021

The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Canada	<a href="mailto:pm@pm.gc.ca">pm@pm.gc.ca</a>
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**Dear Prime Minister and Premiers:**

As COVID-19 infection rates grow in Canada, the tragic human and economic toll taken by the disease continues to mount.

In addition to the loss of lives and the enormous social costs of the disease, the impact on Canada's businesses is severe. **We want to thank all levels of government for the support you have provided for business in these unprecedented circumstances.** Without it, many thousands more businesses would have been forced to close, with the permanent loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs.

The social and economic cost of the pandemic is both unprecedented and unsustainable. It is essential that we all do what we can to bring COVID-19 under control so that both families and businesses are once again able to operate normally.



Lockdowns are not a solution to the pandemic. At best, they are a short-term measure to buy time for us to put more effective strategies in place. The price to buy that time can be measured in business failures, growing mental health, family violence and drug addiction issues, delays in obtaining critical medical procedures and missed educational opportunities.

**If governments feel they have no choice but to impose further lockdowns, it will be critical to ensure that there is adequate support to keep both individuals and businesses afloat until they can once again support themselves.**

Chambers across Canada are reaching out to their members to get a better understanding of their needs as the pandemic enters this new phase. We will keep you informed of how businesses are faring and what can be done to assist. However, it is already clear that the situation has become critical for many businesses. In particular, they cannot afford to assume more debt. Indeed, as we enter a new year with no prospect of an early return to normal, many are already questioning whether they can continue. **We ask that you work with us to ensure that the levels and types of support provided in this new phase are adequate and effective.**

While support programs are essential in the short term, they, too, are not a solution to our problems. We will only regain our economic health once society and the economy are permanently reopened.

The record-breaking development of vaccines to help us control the disease offers the promise of a return to more normal lives and to restored economic growth. We congratulate the Government of Canada for securing commitments for sufficient quantities of vaccines to immunize our population. **Now our number one priority must be to ensure those immunizations take place without delay.** Stepping up the pace of vaccinations will require both that we have the logistics in place to have them distributed and administered and that we educate Canadians about the critical importance of being vaccinated.

During the earlier stage of the pandemic, Canada's businesses retooled quickly to produce Personal Protective Equipment and other essential products. They invested heavily in new equipment and processes to keep their employees safe, and they developed innovative new services to meet Canadians' needs. They are anxious to do their part in helping you provide both the logistics and education required to ensure a safe and rapid vaccination program. In addition, we believe that any economic recovery must be business-led. We want to work with you on recovery strategies that can be implemented at the same time as we bring the pandemic under control.



The roller-coaster Canadians have been riding for the past several months has left millions feeling powerless and victimised. **We need to restore hope for Canadian families and Canadian businesses alike and help them understand that we can save lives and return to normal conditions more quickly if all of us — government, business and individuals alike — do our parts.** Chambers of Commerce and our members will be pleased to work with you on strategies to use tools like masks and other PPEs, COVID alert apps, contact tracing, wastewater testing, physical safety protocols, rapid testing and speedy vaccination to keep Canadians safe and to speed the day when we reach immunisation levels where authorities can lift remaining restrictions. Because of the nature of our pan-Canadian network, which reaches into several hundred communities throughout the country, we have the capacity to help both with national solutions and with strategies that reflect the diverse circumstances of different regions.

It is easy to be critical of what has and has not been done during the pandemic, but what is most needed now is for each of us to be part of the solution.

We have seen the social consensus that was so valuable in earlier phases of the pandemic become strained just as we enter this new and more difficult phase where collaboration will be more important than ever before. **We are anxious to be part of the solution and we offer to work in partnership with you to marshal the resources needed to contain and defeat COVID-19.**

Sincerely,

Hon. Perrin Beatty P.C., O.C.  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Canadian Chamber of Commerce

Dan Baxter  
Interim CEO  
British Columbia Chamber of Commerce

Ken Kobly  
President & CEO  
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