

June 29, 2020



Dear Prime Minister Trudeau & Minister Morneau,

Leamington and Kingsville are the last two municipalities in Canada which are still in Stage one. This means they continue to experience economic challenges which the rest of the country are not. While the rest of Canada is moving forward, they are being left behind.

With arrangements for agricultural industry-wide enhanced testing being finalized, the public shall continue to hear of high rates of positive test results until the sector (both guest worker and Canadian worker) are fully tested and the situation stabilized.

Leamington and Kingsville businesses are being left behind the rest of the Canada through no fault of their own. The ability to open, or open with expanded offerings, continues to be denied to these deserving businesses which are fundamental to our community. They need responsible support to offset the costs they are incurring because of government restrictions, suffering under them longer than any community in Canada has had to.

While various options have been explored, the following appears most immediately applicable in these circumstances. Many businesses that did qualify for the Canadian Emergency Benefit Account (CEBA), are not aware that they can also apply for the Regional Relief & Recovery Fund (RRRF). However, we have also heard loud and clear from businesses that they do not need more debt – they need to be able to open and re-start the economy.

For those businesses which have applied for the CEBA, worked through the myriad of restricting rules, and find they have been unable to qualify and were declined, they need to know that they can also apply for the similar program (RRRF) with no interest loans and no principle payments until December 31, 2020. This program is funded by FedDev Southwestern Ontario, and delivered by the Community Futures Development Corporation.

That is why I am calling on the Federal government to make a sizable portion of the RRRF forgivable, and to fund the local Community Futures Development Corporation to the extent required to service the needs of Leamington and Kingsville businesses requiring this bridge financing to carry them through to Stage two with the rest of the province.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Epp".

Dave Epp, MP
Chatham-Kent—Leamington
Cc: Chris Lewis, MP Essex
Hilda MacDonald, Mayor of Leamington
Nelson Santos, Mayor of Kingsville

