



Marit Stiles

MPP / Députée, Davenport

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Hon. Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Bldg, Queen's Park,
Toronto, ON
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May 12, 2020

Premier Ford,

I am writing you today on behalf of small and medium-sized businesses in my riding of Davenport who are struggling to survive in the context of COVID-19.

In Davenport, our local shops and services are the heartbeat of our neighbourhoods, and they have been quick to respond to emergency orders, with many forced to close in order to protect their staff and the public. Throughout this time, our community has been active in trying to help businesses make it through this difficult period, supporting them online, ordering take out where they can and buying gift cards for future use.

Governments at all levels have committed to support this vital sector of our economy, yet increasingly, small businesses in my community are telling me the measures will not be enough to see them through this pandemic.

From the day the federal-provincial Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program was announced, my office received calls and emails from businesses telling me that their landlords were simply not interested in participating.

According to a new survey conducted by the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas, **63% of businesses said they could not make all of May's rent, and 60% said they don't think their landlord will apply for CECRA. 43.9% said they were afraid they will be locked out.** Without a moratorium on commercial evictions, these tenants have no leverage to negotiate and risk losing their storefronts entirely.

Many business owners are telling me that they are not eligible for federal wage subsidies, and are understandably, nervous about taking on more debt through the Canada Emergency Business Account after already pouring so much of their own money into their businesses.

No one wants to see our province's main streets full of boarded up shops or to have the retail, service and food sectors completely dominated by corporate chains that have the resources to survive. Our small, local businesses are what make our communities liveable, walkable places – and if we want them to survive, we need your government to step up and do the following:

- **Provide substantial rent subsidies for commercial lease holders, retroactive to April 1st, providing up to 75% of their rents capped at \$10,000 per month so that they can pay their rents and so small landlords who depend on their rental income can survive.**
- **Freeze utility payments during the pandemic.**
- **Declare an immediate moratorium on commercial evictions and back it up in law.**

These are proposals that the Official Opposition NDP have been calling for since the extent of the pandemic became clear and my colleagues and I remain committed to working with the government to bring in these measures with the speed they require.

Finally, I also want to express concerns that I have heard regarding the loosening of restrictions. While I know many businesses are eager to be able to connect with customers again, they also want to protect themselves, their workers and patrons.

I have heard from businesses who have highlighted the need for:

- **More notice when there is a change in the restrictions**
- **Clarity on the public health guidelines in order to operate safely**
- **Access to dedicated supply chains for protective equipment,**
- **And financial supports to adapt to this new way of doing business.**

Premier, the actions you take today can make the difference between a revived and robust local economy that boosts the whole province, or more stories of financial ruin and unemployment.

Please act now to save our local businesses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marit Stiles', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Marit Stiles MPP
Davenport**

c.c.: Ana Bailão, Councillor and Deputy Mayor
Julie Dzerowicz, MP for Davenport