

Dear Premier Iain Rankin,

The situation in Nova Scotia changed drastically overnight. No one could have seen it coming.

Our Industry does not disagree with the shutdown; in fact we completely support the measures taken.

We cannot, however, underestimate the impact of this lockdown on Small Business, especially given how challenging this year has been for everyone.

It is disappointing and disheartening that the Province is not responding to the urgency of this situation.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of a robust, immediate, and wide-reaching response to the many issues facing Small Business, days before rent and tax payments are due.

The decisions that the province makes today will affect Small Business' ability to weather this storm, and still be standing when the province re-opens.

The province seems to believe that federal government programs will cover our losses; we know that many of these programs are tailored to help medium to large business and are literally closed to many small business owners in the province.

The Province's proposed impact grant may seem like a fair and reasonable amount, but those educated in the running of Small Business know that it does not even come close to paying one of the bills that we are currently facing within days.

We are still waiting patiently for the small business property tax rebate program announced two months ago, but is still inaccessible. How can the Province expect Small Business owners to wait while the people working on this important program 'figure out the details'? As Small Business owners we are now dealing with zero security, no wages, and mounting bills while government employees, who have guaranteed jobs and salaries, play with our futures.

A provincial lockdown requires provincial assistance for Nova Scotia's biggest employer. The federal wage subsidy certainly benefited many, but the harsh reality is that we can no longer wait for the red tape and application deadlines; our employees need support, and they need it now. Small business employs over six hundred and eighty five thousand Nova Scotians, many of them the same Nova Scotians who have come out in droves for asymptomatic testing, as well as volunteering to run testing sites. If Small Business fails, what is left of our province?

Mr. Premier, Small Business is the glue that holds Nova Scotia together. We are the friendly smile behind the mask for lonely seniors. We are the caring ear for the mother who has not hugged her children in a year. We serve food and drink to those who struggle with the weight of everyday life in a pandemic. We provide beauty for those who have been homebound, and a distraction for those who are struggling to cope. We are a lifeline to many Nova Scotians who have come to depend on their local businesses for so much more during this pandemic.

We want to be here when the pandemic is over, and we know that our customers want this too. Please help us to help you rebuild the province, and roar back when it is time.

We need financial support today.

Respectfully,