



**FREDERICTON
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**
— The Voice of Business —

364 York Street, Suite 200
Fredericton, NB
E3B 3P7



23 March 2020

Hon. Mary Wilson, Minister of Economic Development and Small Business
Chancery Place, PO Box 6000
675 King Street
Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 1E9
Via email: mary.wilson@gnb.ca

Re: Support and Information for Business Through COVID-19 Crisis

Dear Minister Wilson:

Thank you for the effort and long hours put in by you, your team and all of government as we weather the COVID-19 crisis together. We appreciate the government putting forward the Business Navigator program as an additional resource to address COVID-19-specific questions from the business community. The daily updates by Chief Medical Officer Russell and Premier Higgs have been valuable and necessary to all New Brunswickers, including business owners.

I am writing today to communicate (a) some of the methods which our members have told us that the provincial government can support business through the crisis and (b) some of the questions that businesses have about current support and processes. The following list is not exhaustive and as time progresses, we will keep you updated on what our members need from government.

Requested Support:

- Defer all taxes and fees owed to the Government of New Brunswick until revenue streams improve – specifically this would include property taxes.
- Freeze all payments to government entities including utilities without penalties or interest.
- Apply a minimum 3-month deferral on all business loan payments and related interest charges due to the government, as of April 1, 2020.
- Modify the Small Business Investor Tax Credit to allow business owners to invest their personal savings into their existing businesses in the coming and receive the 50% personal credit during next year's tax period.
- Advocacy support to the federal government for a much higher wage subsidy – in the range of 75-80% as other nations have begun to implement. We are also seeking a deferral of payroll taxes such as CPP and EI.



**FREDERICTON
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**
— The Voice of Business —

364 York Street, Suite 200
Fredericton, NB
E3B 3P7



Questions:

- When can we expect to have details regarding WorkSafeNB's premium deferral?
- Will the planned increase to New Brunswick's minimum wage still be implemented on 1 April ?
- Since restaurants are currently take out only, are they able to have their regular service of alcohol as part of the takeout?
- How will the province mitigate losses to residential landlords from unpaid rents in April and May given the eviction restrictions announced last week?
- Will there be any relief provided to small businesses who will have difficulty paying rents during the crisis?

As I know you appreciate, business owners are looking to government for unprecedented support to deal with this unprecedented situation. We have not dealt with such a challenge during our lifetimes and we will need all levels of government to think boldly outside of the box to get through. The paradigms, reference points and processes that existed mere days ago are gone – without extraordinary government intervention we will see businesses and jobs lost en masse throughout the province.

To get the best and most current information, your department should consider forming a [Business/Employee COVID-19 Response Team](#), similar to one that has been set up and led by government in Nova Scotia. This will allow on-the-ground multi-stakeholder input at a time when you need it most.

Thank you for maintaining open lines of communication throughout the crisis – we look forward to continuing to work together to get through these challenges.

Sincerely,

Krista Ross, CEO, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce

cc: Hon. Blaine Higgs, Premier, Province of New Brunswick

cc: Hon. Ernie Steeves, Minister of Finance, Province of New Brunswick

cc: Hon. Ted Flemming, Minister of Health, Province of New Brunswick

cc: Hon. Sherry Wilson, Minister Responsible for Service New Brunswick, Province of New Brunswick

cc: Doug Jones, President and CEO, WorkSafeNB

364 York Street, Suite 200, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, E3B 3P7

E-mail: fchamber@frederictonchamber.ca Website: www.frederictonchamber.ca

Tel: 506- 458-8006 Fax: 506 451-1119