



SUBMISSION TO THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

TO: HONOURABLE ROD PHILLIPS, MINISTRY OF FINANCE, PROVINCE OF ONTARIO
PRESENTED BY: SUELING CHING, PRESIDENT AND CEO, OTTAWA BOARD OF TRADE
SUBJECT: 2020 FALL BUDGET CONSULTATIONS - OTTAWA
DATE: SEPTEMBER 25, 2020

Good afternoon and thank you for this opportunity to present. My name is Sueling Ching, President and CEO of the Ottawa Board of Trade, the voice for businesses Ottawa, our Nation's Capital.

Congratulations and thank you, Minister Phillips and the provincial government for your dedication and leadership during this time of change and challenge. The level of collaboration we have witnessed is to be commended and we encourage the same radical commitment to work together as we navigate a complicated economic and health recovery.

This pandemic has provided us with a unique opportunity to clearly identify the fault lines in our businesses, our communities and our governments. In many ways we have been forced to evolve ten years in the last six months and it behooves us to reflect on the lessons we have learned with the goal to, not just recover, or even build back better but to transform into the communities that we have the potential to be.

We will be living with COVID for longer than we can sustain this level of government support to keep our economy going. The key to economic recovery is to empower and inspire private enterprise to lead the way. The opportunity for our government is to share a vision for prosperity where every entrepreneur can see themselves. We must invest in the right infrastructure and human capital and eliminate all barriers to business.

Today, we are asking the provincial government to focus on three main areas for our economic evolution . . .

1. Stay open; get back to business and get people back to work.

- a. Ensure high levels of access and sophistication for testing and contact tracing
- b. Invest in a return to school and child-care strategy that inclusively supports education of our children thereby allowing parents to productively contribute to our economy
- c. Training and retraining for employees and entrepreneurs who are displaced or must close their businesses – leverage mentors and peer groups with relevant experience
- d. Address regional labour market needs with flexible trades certification programs.

- 2. Target financial investments in the most vulnerable sectors and areas of business that need to be modernized or completely transformed.**
 - a. Broadband for all, immediately. Set bold goals and develop innovative solutions such as the pilot project, “Swift” in Southwestern Ontario and satellite options
 - b. Access to capital and start-up funding with more leniency, less risk to personal assets and with a focus on a marginalized population
 - c. Expand and change the rent program as per the feedback from businesses re: thresholds and direct access, a program that does not strain the landlord-tenant relationship
 - d. Support for new costs such as PPE, retrofitting and management training like leadership, accessing new markets, systems innovation and workforce planning
 - e. Additional support and flexibility for municipalities to ensure grass roots, community centered priority setting

- 3. Create policies and programs that foster a competitive environment and inspire business confidence and growth.**
 - a. Government procurement practices that demonstrate leadership in supporting Ontario first, Canada next and the world third
 - b. Greater collaboration with all levels of government to optimize resources, eliminate duplication and reduce deferral of responsibilities
 - c. Elimination of interprovincial trade barriers to support access to our own markets
 - d. Adapt the regulatory modernization agenda to COVID-19 realities

We believe this challenge can be turned into an opportunity if we become visionaries and collaborators focused on priorities that create inclusive and sustainable growth.

Thank you for your continued commitment and your attention today.