

January 11, 2021

Office of the Premier
Executive Branch
307 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
T5K 2B6

Premier Kenney,

The Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce represents more than 1200 businesses who, when able to operate, employ over 20,000 Albertans. Our Chamber commends the Alberta government's decision to allow all retail businesses to remain open, in albeit limited capacity, refraining from trying to decide which goods are "essential" vs "non-essential" as this step is important to our economic outlook.

The latest round of business closures, however, require more information and communication surrounding the available science and data than has been provided to date. Businesses who have been forced to close once again have followed health protocols, implemented new processes and procedures, spending valuable time and resources to do their part to protect society. As the Voice of Business in Grande Prairie for over a century we must support our members who have made it clear, while they support the measures taken to protect their well-being, their confusion and frustration with the current information dictating which businesses are and are not able to operate.

There are several reference points that the Chief Medical Officer and Emergency Management Cabinet Committee use to make their recommendations and decisions. We are asking the Alberta government to outline a re-open plan that correlates these data points in detail with policy that clearly outlines actions expected of operators to begin reopening and to keep our economy going. As a community that is several hours away from other major centers, we are also asking that this re-open plan be considered on a regional basis and that population density be examined.

Our Chamber of Commerce respects that there is a balance that needs to be considered between protecting our citizens and health system and the economy. We need answers for the entrepreneurs who have poured their hearts, souls and savings into their dreams only to have them put on hold for an indeterminable amount time; while business appreciates the revised relaunch grant being made, it simply does not make up for the costs endured and the uncertainty faced by operators every day. The pandemic has proven to be difficult to predict, anticipate and control, yet every extension of restrictions moves these Albertans – and the Albertans who depend on the jobs our entrepreneurs create – closer to the brink of no return and insolvency with long term consequences for the fiscal future of our province.

Thank you for your consideration. We are always available to meet and discuss this matter further.

Yours truly,

Larry Gibson
Chair of the Board of Directors
Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce