

NOVA SCOTIA'S BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS CALL UPON PROVINCIAL  
GOVERNMENT FOR IMMEDIATE AID TO COMPENSATE FOR INCREASED RESTRICTIONS

December 16, 2021

Dear Premier Houston:

We are writing to you today representing over 4,000 downtown and main street businesses from across Nova Scotia. We are at a critical stage in our fight against COVID-19. We require your immediate attention and assistance so that our members can persevere through this phase best described as "living with Covid".

Since early 2020, main street small businesses have borne the brunt of the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions which have been imposed to maintain broad public safety. As you will recall, the 2020 holiday season was essentially lost to many in the retail, hospitality, restaurant, and cultural sectors. Now, the holiday 2021 season will also be impacted by restrictions, as well as the general fear that is caused by the imposition of restrictions and growing cases. Many of our businesses have survived until now, largely thanks to the diminishing federal support programs. With these becoming less accessible, lack of cash reserves for everyone as they enter the slow winter season, and the spectre of renewed restrictions any time cases rise, the situation on main street is dire.

Small businesses have done their part to continue to serve customers, comply with restrictions, encourage vaccinations, and maintain a sense of optimism as best they can. However, this latest round of restrictions is particularly disheartening. It has come without warning, consultation, or any supports. Many of our members are questioning its necessity, given that while cases are unquestionably on the rise, hospitalizations remain very low for those who are fully vaccinated.

If downtowns, main streets, and certain sectors are to continue to bear the burden of restrictions for the good of public health, we must advocate for automatic and substantial financial support while they do so. This is only equitable, as we are all asked to pull together to get through this pandemic. Another round of the small business impact grant would be a starting point.

We, the business improvement districts of Nova Scotia, are always ready to work with you, provide feedback from our members, aid with consultation, and provide ideas for how we can work together to help small business survive. Without action, our downtowns and main streets will look very different in 2022. More businesses will close, and our communities will feel this loss. People who work in these businesses will lose their jobs. Through these past 20 months small businesses have been on the front lines in Nova Scotia, demonstrating steadfast commitment to public safety and their communities. Let us now show small business that their government has their back – that we are all in this together, and that we will all get out of this together.

Sincerely,

**Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission**

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**Downtown Halifax Business Commission**

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**North End Business Association**

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**Porters Lake Business Association**

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**Quinpool Road Mainstreet District Association**

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**Sackville Business Association**

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**Spring Garden Area Business Association**

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**Spryfield Business Commission**

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**Sydney Downtown Development Association**

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**The Village On Main – Community Improvement District**

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cc:

The Hon. Susan Corkum-Greek, Minister of Economic Development

Scott Farmer, Deputy Minister of Economic Development