



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Honourable John Horgan, MLA
Premier of British Columbia
West Annex
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4

May 13, 2020

Dear Premier:

On behalf of the BC Liberal Official Opposition, I am writing to express our deep concern for the hospitality industry and the need for creative actions to help the sector as they plan to re-open.

Recent polling suggests 75% of restaurant operators are either very, or extremely, concerned about their current level of debt and one out of every two independent restaurants does not expect to survive. Restaurants Canada estimates 121,500 B.C. jobs have been lost in the sector alone. They need help and they need it now.

Governments of all levels must be flexible and innovative to support small businesses and workers in the hospitality sector. The Official Opposition is, therefore, calling on your government to take the following actions to support the re-opening of restaurants:

- Double the tax deduction for business related meals to 100%;
- Help municipalities to expedite permits for patio and outdoor dining for food and liquor service;
- Consider any increased patio or outdoor space a continuation of an existing provincial liquor approval and not require additional applications or fees;
- Permanently allow restaurants with a liquor or food primary licence to deliver alcohol offsite;
- Allow restaurants, bars, and hotels to purchase liquor at wholesale prices from any liquor store, as was recommended by the government's own panel over two years ago; and
- Create a small business hardship grant of up to \$5,000 a month, based on 15 per cent of a business's monthly sales revenue, as both Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia have already done.

These actions supplement our call for broader economic actions, including tax breaks such as temporary PST relief, a short-term commercial rent relief plan that includes a no-eviction backstop, and the need for funding for businesses and non-profits to secure personal protective equipment.

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With nearly one out of 10 restaurants having already closed their doors permanently and another 18 per cent likely to soon if current conditions continue, we must act now. We urge you to move quickly on providing this relief so that British Columbians' restauranteurs can get back in business again soon.

Now is the time to be bold and brave.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Wilkinson".

Andrew Wilkinson, Q.C., MLA
Leader of the Official Opposition