

# YELLOWHEAD REGION CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE



February 11, 2021

The Honourable Jason Kenney, MLA  
Premier of Alberta  
Office of the Premier  
307 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6  
premier@gov.ab.ca

Dear Mr. Kenney,

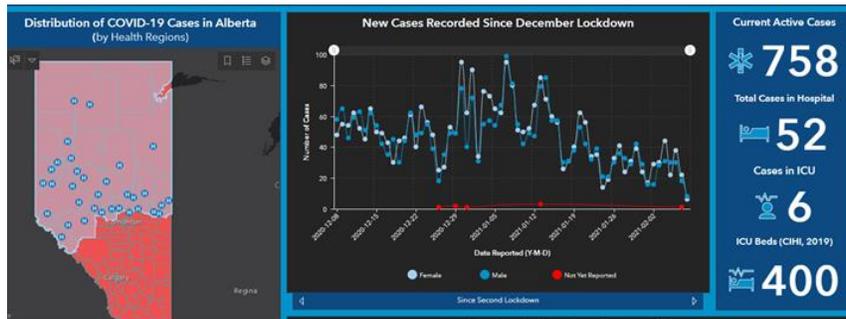
On behalf of the membership of the Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce, Swan Hills Chamber of Commerce, Fox Creek Chamber of Commerce, Onoway & District Chamber of Commerce, Barrhead & District Chamber of Commerce and Hinton & District Chamber of Commerce, it is requested that the Government of Alberta, via the Emergency Management Cabinet Committee and Jobs and Economy Cabinet Policy Committee, re-evaluate the parameters regarding businesses ability to re-open. The current parameters are subject to the number of hospitalizations acting as a threshold, which does not allow industry to coordinate their operations in a consistent and continuous manner.

Entrepreneurs and business leaders are driven by autonomy; their ability to act on their own values and interest. These individuals risk their capital and security in order to achieve success, which in turn contributes to the overall economic health of our province. The coordinated measures outlined in the most recent reopening strategy do not provide consistency to business, and instead communicates a “one day open, next day closed” mentality from the Alberta government.

Additionally, regions experiencing minimal active “cases” are under the same restrictions as areas with a higher population density and therefore, higher case count. And within these more densely populated areas, there are larger facilities and centers that can house a significant number of patrons, regardless of a capacity set at 15% of the fire code. For example, every resident of Fox Creek and Swan Hills could occupy West Edmonton Mall and that would satisfy the occupancy limit, but these same individuals cannot participate in formal recreation, dining, or shopping indoors in their own municipalities en masse. It is these residents that are the lifeblood of their smaller communities and local economies. By placing equal, yet unjust, restrictions across the province, there is unbalanced disparity as an end result as you can see in the table below.

	Population	Cumulative Cases	% of Population Infected	Cumulative Deaths	Current Cases	Current % of Population Infected	Suicide (2020 Provincial)	Unemployment	Job Bank Vacancies		
<b>North Zone</b>	<b>484,964</b>	<b>10,600</b>	<b>2.186%</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>0.156%</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>72,260</b>	<b>675</b>	
Edmonton Zone	1,363,653	52,300	3.835%	892	1748	0.128%	104	0.008%	13%	178,639	2,721
Calgary Zone	1,622,391	48,900	3.014%	536	2335	0.144%	111	0.007%	13%	212,533	1,752

In a recent call with the Alberta Chambers of Commerce, you stated that while case counts are going down in the Edmonton and Calgary zones, they are increasing in rural Alberta, and that if a regional approach was



taken, more restrictions would be justified for areas such as those located in the North Zone. However, based upon provincial data, it is noted that case counts are actually dropping significantly in the North Zone, with some areas at zero cases, yet still treated with the same restrictions at major centres with thousands of cases documented. It should also be observed that the North Zone encompasses over 60% of the land area of the Province of Alberta, naturally reducing population density which should be a significant consideration when comparing to major centres.

We are asking the Government of Alberta to return autonomy to business owners, and give them back their right to achieve prosperity. We are asking for the opportunity to thrive once again and provide valued services to our communities. We are asking for a consistent and predictable

plan that is sustainable and reasonable. Our smaller urban centers and rural communities have been punished enough, and we cannot support this “Path Forward.”

Sincerely,

**Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce  
Hinton & District Chamber of Commerce  
Swan Hills Chamber of Commerce**

**Barrhead & District Chamber of Commerce  
Onoway & District Chamber of Commerce  
Fox Creek Chamber of Commerce**

Cc:  
Hon. Ric McIver (Vice Chair, Emergency Management Cabinet Committee)  
Hon. Kaycee Madu  
Hon. Travis Toews  
Hon. Jason Nixon  
Hon. Devin Dreesen  
Hon. Prasad Panda  
Hon. Rajan Sawhney  
Hon. Tyler Shandro  
Hon. Rick Wilson

Hon. Doug Schweitzer (Chair, Jobs and Economy Cabinet Policy Committee)  
Hon. Demetrios Nicolaides (Vice Chair, Jobs and Economy Cabinet Policy Committee)  
Hon. Jason Copping  
Hon. Travis Toews  
Hon. Nate Glubish  
Hon. Grant Hunter  
Mr. Glenn van Dijken, MLA  
Mr. Martin Long, MLA