



ALBERTA

JOBS, ECONOMY AND INNOVATION

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary-Elbow*

March 12, 2021

AR 81965

His Worship Dave McKenzie
Mayor
Town of Barrhead

Kristine Bryant
Vice President
Barrhead & District Chamber of Commerce
JPederson@barrhead.ca

Dear Mayor McKenzie and Kristine Bryant,

Premier Jason Kenney shared your email regarding Alberta's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact on businesses. As the Minister of Jobs, Economy and Innovation, I appreciate this opportunity to respond on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

There is still broad spread of COVID-19 across the entire province. However, the enhanced public health measures introduced in December 2020 appear to have slowed the rapid rate of growth we were experiencing. Alberta Health continues to evaluate the enhanced public health measures that were instituted in December. I assure you, these decisions were not taken lightly, and were based on the best, most up-to-date information and data.

We have introduced a clear, step-wise approach to easing public health restrictions that outlines when sectors are able to begin increasing activities. These steps and benchmarks will provide a transparent approach to easing restrictions for businesses and individuals, while at the same time protecting the health care system. Each step has an associated benchmark of COVID-19 impacts to our health care system. Changes to restrictions will be considered once a benchmark is reached. This stepped approach will only work if Albertans continue to follow existing health measures and make good choices to keep our numbers trending down.

The health and safety of Albertans is our top priority, and Alberta's government has started reopening by focusing on lower risk activities first. We want to slowly and safely relax restrictions, and avoid a rebound in disease so that businesses and operators are

not faced with the disruptive effect of opening and closing. For the full list of measures, please visit www.alberta.ca/COVID19.

We recognize that Alberta employers and businesses are facing significant challenges and uncertainty as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses have worked hard to protect our community from the spread of COVID-19. That is why Alberta's government has offered historic support for small and medium-sized businesses in our province.

On February 17, 2021, Alberta's government announced the new Enhanced COVID-19 Business Benefit. Businesses that can demonstrate a revenue reduction of 60 per cent or more will be eligible to receive 15 per cent of their monthly revenue, up to a maximum of \$10,000. The challenges associated with COVID-19 are ongoing, and this additional payment will provide even more immediate relief to Alberta's small businesses.

Payments under the Enhanced COVID-19 Business Benefit will be available in April 2021 following the conclusion of the Small and Medium Enterprise Relaunch Grant program. Detailed information on program guidelines will be available closer to the launch date in April. For updates, please follow www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx.

Small businesses can also seek free advice, coaching, and information on COVID-19 resources and supports through Business Link, which provides one-on-one guidance to Albertans who operate a small business. You can visit Business Link online at www.businesslink.ca, or you can connect with a business strategist at 1-800-272-9675.

Alberta businesses are the heartbeat of our economy, and we promised our job creators that we would be there to support them throughout this pandemic. We will continue to evaluate the needs of Albertans.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your thoughts. I appreciate hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Doug Schweitzer, Q.C.
Minister of Jobs, Economy and Innovation

cc: Honourable Jason Kenney
Premier of Alberta