



March 30, 2020

Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
777 Bay Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, ON  
M5G 2E5

**RE: Supporting small businesses and landlords in commercial tenancies**

Dear Minister Clark,

Small business tenants in Brampton, and the rest of Ontario, are feeling a lot of anxiety and uncertainty as we approach the first of the month's rent payments due to the economic disruption of COVID-19. The Brampton Board of Trade (BBOT) asks that you consider initiatives to support small businesses so when employees do return to work, they have a workplace to return to. Without initiatives to support rental payment and business continuity, it is our fear that small business employers will face undue hardship and their employees will be unable to help kickstart the economy after this period of operating restrictions, business downturn and social distancing ends.

The Commercial Tenancies Act provides that a commercial landlord may repossess a leased premise 15 days after a tenant fail to both (1) pay rent and (2) remedy that failure in the interim. It is not necessary for a landlord to pursue judicial sanction or obtain a Writ of Possession in the case of a failure to pay rent before changing the locks; and there is no requirement for a landlord to give the tenant notice or allow the tenant to pay rent after the 15 days.

**Immediate Action:**

Agreements between landlord and commercial tenants may be useful in the immediate term to keep businesses in place so they can re-open. However, after months without revenue, a large rent deferral bill will force many businesses to shutter permanently.

Complementary options for supporting commercial tenants include:

- Encouraging corporate landlords to set up relief funds for their commercial renters.
- Providing landlords appropriate access to small business aid packages, so that they are better able to negotiate rents for those tenants who cannot pay.
- Encouraging communities to establish rent banks or expanding the Toronto Rent Bank to the entire province and to commercial tenants, as recommended by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. The Bank currently provides interest-free repayable loans for low-income households. This service could be extended to the province, and to commercial renters. Corporate landlords could manage or contribute to this fund.

Thank you for giving immediate consideration to these recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Letts". The signature is stylized and written over a light grey rectangular background.

Todd Letts, MBA, CCE  
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister, Small Business and Red Tape Reduction