

April 17, 2020

Honourable Carole James, MLA  
Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4  
Via Email: [FIN.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:FIN.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

**Re: COVID-19 Provincial Economic Stimulus**

Dear Minister:

On behalf of our 730 members, my sincere thanks to you, the Premier, the Government – and, importantly, British Columbia’s public service employees – for your efforts to address the health, social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We applaud the bold – and swift – economic solutions put forward to date to safeguard our community, our chamber members, and our Provincial economy. We appreciate the collaborative work of our Province with the Federal Government to further support British Columbians, and our local businesses.

**On behalf of Whistler’s businesses, I’m asking for more help. Now. What we are hearing – and seeing – is that our local businesses will not survive the next few weeks, let alone the next few months.**

This means that when we do, eventually, welcome the world back to Whistler – and British Columbia – our community will be unrecognizable. A once bustling village of coffee shops, restaurants of every price point, retail stores, souvenir shops, and health, wellness and beauty services will look significantly different. Furthermore, we simply won’t be able to deliver our needed contribution to the provincial economy, which in 2019 represented nearly 25% in annual tourism tax revenue.

We recommend the following steps be taken immediately:

1. Request that the federal government boost the Canadian Emergency Business Account (CEBA) with 50% forgiveness if repaid by December 31, 2022 and eliminate the \$20,000 minimum payroll and increase or eliminate the ceiling limit to include small service-based organizations that have higher payroll.
2. Review and consider supplementing the federal commercial rent program once announced, in particular in those communities like Whistler where recovery efforts will be delayed as the tourism industry rebuilds.
3. Immediately implement a six-month holiday in tax remittances for the Employer Health Tax.
4. Initiate a tourism sector specific economic taskforce to protect and enable recovery of B.C.’s tourism industry.
5. Encourage the federal government and where necessary ensure your government engages immediately with the credit union system as part of any program that is to be administered by financial institutions. For much of the Sea to Sky corridor, credit unions are the primary business banking relationship. Any delay to the administration of the programs for credit unions causes undue stress for many in our business community.

As an active member of the British Columbia Chamber network, we also support the proposed actions outlined by the BC Chamber of Commerce in their letter to you of March 31, 2020, namely: temporary restrictions on commercial evictions; deferred municipal property tax payments; freezing of the planned minimum-wage increase, clarity on constructive dismissal claims as a result of COVID-19; inclusion of Credit Unions in financial and regulatory relief; funding for businesses to move to online commerce; and a revised accounts payable process for government entities.

Thank you again for your bold leadership and the opportunity to engage with you in this ongoing dialogue on how we rise to the challenge that is COVID-19 – *together*.

Sincerely,



Melissa Pace  
CEO  
Whistler Chamber of Commerce

CC:

Government of British Columbia

- Hon. John Horgan, Premier of BC [premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca)
- Hon. Jordan Sturdy, Member of Parliament, West Vancouver - Sea to Sky Country  
[jordan.sturdy.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:jordan.sturdy.MLA@leg.bc.ca)

Government of Canada

- Hon. Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance [bill.morneau@parl.gc.ca](mailto:bill.morneau@parl.gc.ca)
- Hon. Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages  
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- Hon. Mary Ng, Minister Small Business and Export Promotion [mary.ng@parl.gc.ca](mailto:mary.ng@parl.gc.ca)
- Hon. Patrick Weiler, MP West Vancouver – Sunshine Coast – Sea to Sky Country  
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BC Chamber of Commerce

- Val Litwin, President and CEO, BC Chamber of Commerce [vlitwin@bccchamber.org](mailto:vlitwin@bccchamber.org)

Resort Municipality of Whistler

- His Worship, Mayor Jack Crompton, Resort Municipality of Whistler [jcrompton@whistler.ca](mailto:jcrompton@whistler.ca)
- Mike Furey, CAO, Resort Municipality of Whistler [mfurey@whistler.ca](mailto:mfurey@whistler.ca)