

Hon. Jason Kenney
307 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB
Canada T5K 2B6

Dear Premier Kenney,

Thank you for your leadership to support Albertans and employers during the COVID-19 pandemic and dramatic drop in oil prices. Chamber members across the province have welcomed announcements to ease the burdens of WCB premiums, education property taxes and non-municipal utility payments.

Through our network, we continue to hear that current fiscal measures to help employers remain financially solvent are not resolving several critical issues for businesses dealing with little to no revenue. Key issues include rental and lease obligations, insurance premiums, and municipal property taxes and utility services. While credit relief has helped these businesses, having to maintain payments on loan interest could still force many to default.

With the view of supporting employee retention and preventing business closures, we offer the following measures for your consideration:

- Freeze collection of insurance premiums tax on life, accident, sickness, casualty and property coverage and provide a credit next year for those who have already paid their premiums.
- Require commercial landlords to amortize deferred rent payments. Lost income support could be provided for landlords unable to defer their own commercial loan obligations.
- Mandate municipalities to defer municipal property taxes and waive any associated late fees and penalties. This should also include deferring municipal utility services payments for three months.
- Freeze municipal franchise fees for utility services at current rates until at least 2022.

In the event your government decides to shut down non-essential businesses, we would encourage you to consider allowing businesses that are able to operate without public contact to continue to do so. This may include offering remote services through phone and email orders and payments as well as curbside delivery and pickups. Businesses operating on this basis could be required to register with the province and keep a record of their activities, ensuring health officials have the ability to track COVID-19 and reduce community transmission.

We will continue to communicate issues and opportunities to support business to both your government and the federal government. Should you have ideas for how our network could support the province and your efforts to help Alberta businesses, please let us know. We are here to help.

Sincerely and best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Kobly', enclosed in a light gray rectangular box.

Ken Kobly
President and CEO, Alberta Chambers of Commerce

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