
March 30, 2020

John Horgan

Premier

premier@gov.bc.ca

Selina Robinson

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

MAH.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Premier Horgan and Minister Robinson


On behalf of the Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce and its more than 600 members, we request that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing take action to support business owners and residents in B.C. during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Specifically, we request that the Province:

- Provide business and residential property owners the ability to apply for a deferral of property taxes until Sept. 30, 2020;
- Provide business and residential property owners the ability to apply for a deferral of local government utility service payments until Sept. 30, 2020;
- Support municipalities, regional districts and other local agencies in their ability to provide services until Sept. 30, 2020.

The reality is that business owners in B.C. have been impacted negatively by the Covid-19 pandemic, including disrupted revenue streams while many fixed costs continue. Many are also left with residential mortgages and caring for children or elderly parents. They require some certainty that they can pay essential bills at this time, while preparing for property taxes in the future. Tax deferral is already being investigated by some municipalities, including Penticton.

We have called for property owners to have the ability to apply for a deferral on property taxes as there will be those who are in a position to pay by the traditional deadline and should be encouraged to do so as a way of supporting their community.

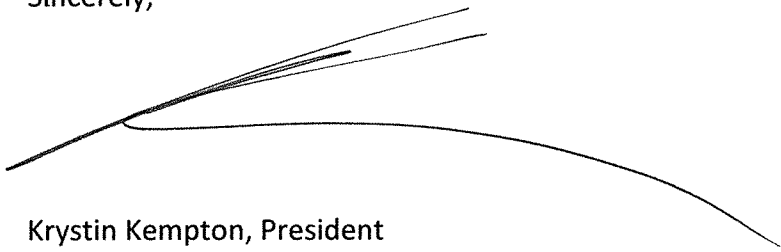


At the same time that we request property tax deferral, we are cognizant of the potential impact of municipalities, regional districts and other local government agencies to operate. We would urge the provincial government to take measures to ensure local governments can continue to provide services to residents until a property tax deferral concludes.

We appreciate the leadership the provincial government has taken on behalf of all British Columbians, and we believe that there are additional actions that can be taken to support business owners and residents.

If you would like to discuss our request further, please contact us. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Krystin Kempton, President
Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce

CC; Eric Foster, Vernon-Monashee MLA
Todd Stone, Official Opposition Critic for Municipal Affairs
Adam Olsen, Green Interim Leader
Andrew Weaver, Oak Bay-Gordon Head MLA
Kevin Acton, RDNO Chairperson
Victor Cumming, City of Vernon Mayor
Jim Garlick, District of Coldstream Mayor
Karla Kozakevich, Okanagan Regional Library Chairperson