

Hon. Dalton McGuinty, MPP
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Fax Number for Premier McGuinty (416) 325-3745

Dear Premier McGuinty,

I am writing to you to ask that you ease the burden placed on our business from the planned increases to the minimum wage. As you know from our industry association, the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association (ORHMA), we are labour intensive industry with labour accounting for fully a third of our operating costs. I appreciate that in Ontario we have differentiated wage rates for different categories of employees, including liquor servers and students, and hospitality relies heavily not only on these categories of employees but on the differentiated wage rates.

The most recent economic downturn has dramatically affected the hospitality sector. It is often said that we are the first into a recession and the last ones out. Raising the minimum wage prevents employers from giving raises based on merit because there simply aren't enough dollars to go around.

We employ thousands of Ontarians in every community across our province. Working together through our industry voice, the ORHMA, we have created new programs and revamped old ones to deliver as many services as possible at as low a cost as possible to survive. We are doing what we can to meet our payroll until we too can join in the anticipated economic recovery.

However, the planned increases in the minimum wage come at the absolute worst time as our revenues are in sharp decline. As our industry reels from a long list of crippling blows, we have tried our best to find ways to make ends meet. Raising the minimum wage is the worst possible message to put out there as we look to the Ontario Government to be our partner and help us through these tough times. We sell service above all else. Raising the cost of labour forces us to cut back hours or layoff employees. Both of these actions cut into our ability to offer good service.

We recognize the Government's commitment on the general minimum wage. Nevertheless, we believe the current circumstances are extraordinary and warrant delaying an increase in the general minimum wage. As a compromise, we would ask that you freeze the minimum wage for liquor servers and students. We need strong action and leadership now to ensure that those of us in the hospitality sector can join in on the anticipated economic recovery.

I look forward to your favourable reply.

Sincerely,

Name:

Address: