

Friday March 20, 2020

Re: Recovery Recommendations for Ontario's Hospitality Industry

The challenges faced by Ontario's hospitality industry as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak are catastrophic. In order for businesses to recover post COVID-19, a robust recovery plan is required. The industry needs immediate support from the provincial government in order to survive.

These erratic times call for extraordinary responses. Accommodation and foodservice establishments are looking for leniency on a number of items in order to respond to the fast-changing climate that this outbreak has brought upon us.

On behalf of Ontario's hospitality industry, ORHMA is calling on the provincial government to assist with deferring the following payments:

- WSIB payments
- Hydro and Gas payments
- Work with the federal government in deferring HST payments and payroll taxes
- Work with municipalities to defer property tax, rents/leases and utilities
- Prevent evictions and lockouts for missed rents and mortgages

In order to slow the spread of COVID-19, restaurants in Ontario were asked to close their doors to dine-in, with the exception of delivery and take-out. The industry was already experiencing a slow down prior to Ontario's mandate to close their doors and hotels were also seeing an influx of cancellations. As a result, thousands of employee lay-offs have been made in response to compliance and support to government and the social distancing of COVID-19.

ORHMA is asking Ontario to work with the Federal Government for these changes:

- Remove wait times from EI for all
- Increase the length of EI benefits for non-benefited staff from 13 weeks to 20 weeks
- Increase the amount of the benefit while on EI from 55% to 75%
- Protect foreign staff on work permits from being negatively affected due to lay-offs
- Remove the 20-hour limit for international students so they are able to find alternate work

In an effort to offer support to Ontario's Hospitality Industry, once this global pandemic has passed and in order to recover lost business, ORHMA is recommending the following measure to the provincial government for consideration.

- Set up an industry advisory group to work with government in reinvigoration

We recognize these are unsettling times and we thank you for your leadership with these necessary actions.

Yours in hospitality,



Tony Elenis
President & CEO
Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association (ORHMA)