

January 21, 2022

Hon. Dennis King, Premier of PEI  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Shaw South  
95 Rochford Street  
Charlottetown, PE  
C1A 7N8

**RE: Transparency, communication, and support surrounding enhanced public health measures**

Dear Premier King;

On behalf of the Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to you in response to your government's recent announcement of enhanced public health measures until at least January 31, 2022. The Chamber recognizes and understands this recent decision was to protect Islanders and our healthcare system. However, as we move forward our members are looking for transparency as it relates to the provincial government's decision making, stronger communications surrounding the decision and clearer direction to the business community.

The pandemic has caused varying impacts for all Islanders. With these new measures, it continues to cause frustration and exhaustion to businesses across PEI, especially in restaurants, entertainment, and fitness centres, to name a few examples. We note that there was minimal notice before impacted businesses were required to adapt to the new restrictions. For many, this included laying off staff, cancelling shipments, and altering hours of operation. There is also confusion concerning testing and isolation requirements for large employers. Our members have said they have yet to hear clarity from the CPHO as they deal with employees who test positive or are close contacts. Our members would appreciate more notice and clear communications to ensure more time to adapt and plan.

Similarly, our members are asking that your government provide transparency related to the metrics involved in restriction decision-making. This would include providing industry with best and worst-case scenarios of the modelling and metrics the province used to form their decisions so that businesses can better prepare. Knowing these metrics will give our members an idea of what to expect instead of being disappointed when restrictions are sometimes extended past initial target dates. These metrics would also allow parents to better understand when students may be returning to in-class learning and to better prepare should they not return. By offering transparency and clear direction of the metrics used for COVID-19 decision making, the provincial government will give businesses and their employees confidence and allow for adequate planning.

We note that due to the nature of the enhanced public health measures, many businesses are on their last string while they burn through what cash they have left. Many of our members see the current COVID-19 supports for business as inadequate and leave some businesses falling through the cracks. Businesses are eager to get back to work, but they need government support to bridge the gap while they endure the latest restrictions. We were happy to see the newly announced COVID-19 Wage Rebate for Impacted Industries, but we do encourage you to work with your federal counterparts to provide further support such as fixed expense coverage, stronger income relief for the self employed and to provide confidence to the public that supporting local can be done safely during this wave of COVID-19.

We ask that the provincial government also be mindful of the unintended consequences of re-employing Islanders in the health sector through long-term care homes and other such measures. For many businesses, this means the workers they had are gone and will not be returning despite the investment many of these businesses have placed in these employees. We feel this is, unfortunately, exasperating a labour challenge that individual business owners already had.

Our Chamber remains supportive of the CPHO and your government's decisions to keep Islanders safe and businesses open. That being said, we do expect a level of mindfulness when making decisions that heavily impact our business community. Our members and their employees have been doing everything that is asked of them, and in return, we hope your government can address the issues outlined in this letter.

We look forward to hearing from you on these timely and urgent issues and are prepared to work with you in any way we can to get through this latest wave together.

Sincerely,



Robert Godfrey

*Chief Executive Officer*

CC: Dr. Heather Morrison, Chief Public Health Officer; Pam Williams, Chief of Staff; Adam Ross, Principal Secretary; GCACC Board of Directors