



**Calgary**

Office of the Councillors



September 17, 2021

Dear Minister Schweitzer:

Since the beginning of the pandemic in Alberta in March 2020, small businesses have borne the brunt of the restrictions implemented to slow the spread of Covid-19 in our communities. They have also demonstrated leadership and their commitment to the well-being of our community by continually adapting, even if that comes at great cost. With the announcement of the most recent round of restrictions on September 15, 2021, our business community is once again being asked to play a significant role to protect our health care system and each other.

In the wake of that announcement, The City of Calgary held emergency meetings of both its Business Sector Task Force and the Business Advisory Committee. Several of our participants were also present at the Town Hall you hosted for the business community the evening of September 15. The feedback was clear: while a form of the new Restriction Exemption Program was welcomed, the program as announced is confusing and places the burden of enforcement back on businesses who, after 20 months, are tired of having to continually adapt to rules that don't seem to have any meaning.

These are some of the questions that Calgary-based businesses have about the Restriction Exemption Program:

1. Are there any metrics that will be used to determine how long these measures will last? Will it be tied to hospitalizations? Case numbers? Our businesses would like some predictability as many of them head into the fall and holiday season.
2. If a restaurant or other entertainment establishment that hosts events is participating in the REP, are the restrictions regarding attendance at indoor social gatherings and weddings among those they would be exempted from?
3. What resources is the Province prepared to provide to communities and businesses to enforce these measures? Is the burden of enforcement expected to be held entirely by small businesses and their staff? Will those who harass businesses be subject to fines?
4. If an employee is injured or property damaged during a confrontation, who will bear the burden of satisfying that claim? Small businesses cannot afford another increase in insurance or WCB premiums.

5. Can you ensure that provincial inspectors are educated and informed about these new restrictions so that everyone understands what is permitted and what isn't? In the past, misunderstandings between what health inspectors believe they are required to enforce and the guidance from Alberta Health and other Ministries has led to unnecessary stress for our businesses.
6. Does the Province have any resources or support for small businesses to help them encourage vaccination among their staff? Unlike larger businesses, the loss of a single staff member because they will not get vaccinated is a significant challenge that many of them will choose to avoid instead of having to enforce a vaccine mandate policy.
7. What is meant by "businesses to assist daily living"? Which businesses does this apply to? Is it being left to the individual consumer to determine?
8. Are there plans to implement an App for vaccine verification that would provide consistency among businesses participating in REP, such as the one that BC is using? If so, when could we expect that?

Thank you for addressing these concerns in a timely manner. We look forward to hearing back from you at your earliest convenience.

Kind Regards,



Ward Sutherland

Councillor for Ward 1

City of Calgary

Chair, Business Advisory Committee