



February 19, 2021

Mayor Bill Mills  
Truro Town Council  
695 Prince Street  
Truro, NS  
B2N 1G5

**RE: Support for small business disproportionately impacted by the pandemic**

Dear Mayor Bill Mills,

Thank you for your continued leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the situation evolves, the Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce (TCCC) continues to receive feedback from the business community and communicate it to all levels of government.

As you are aware, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on small business, especially the food service industry. Restaurants Canada notes that the industry is lagging behind nearly every other sector when it comes to economic recovery, putting the industry's future in significant jeopardy. Newly released data from Statistics Canada reconfirms the food service sector has been disproportionately harmed by the ongoing pandemic. The data speaks to the stark year-over-year comparisons for the sector, revealing a precipitous drop in sales between December 2019 and December 2020: Total food service sales are down over 35%; full-service restaurant sales are down over 50%; and drinking place sales are down over 64%

In this region, prior to the pandemic, we experienced a clear positive shift in the vibrancy and interest in our community as we attract newcomers to the town. This is demonstrated in the more than five per cent increase in population statistics. The diverse mix of small businesses, restaurants and entertainment here has contributed to an inviting welcoming atmosphere credited for attracting newcomers. The success and growth of our business community contributes to the overall economic success of this region. When we are ready for a full economic recovery, these businesses must be positioned to continue to drive our local economy. Building vacancy would be unattractive to entice people to move to this area.

We are writing to request the Town of Truro consider a series of actions to support small business as they continue to experience unprecedented revenue losses.

First, we ask that the Town of Truro hold the Commercial Tax Rate for the fiscal year 2021/22.

Next, in summer and fall 2021 continue to permit restaurants to use green spaces, public spaces and portions of streets that could be temporarily modified to serve clients provided they could meet all public health and by-law standards.

Further, we ask the town to suspend permit fees for placement of patios and like structures for 2021.



Many of our business community have struggled to keep their lights on for the past year. These businesses are the heart of our vibrant community, our restaurants are the social fabric of our town, and have made an enormous commitment to remain a viable part of the community. Their sacrifices deserve your consideration as you formulate your budget for the next fiscal year.

The Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce encourages council and its staff to make supporting and promoting local business a priority as we navigate through the pandemic together.

We will continue to monitor and assess new developments pertaining to COVID-19 closely and work with our members, partners and all levels of government to provide support to our business community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Ron Smith  
President  
Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce