

OPEN LETTER: Data Transparency and Industry Consultation Needed to Save Ontario Restaurants

October 29, 2020

VIA E-MAIL

The Honourable Doug Ford, MPP
Premier of Ontario
Premier's Office
Room 281, Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford:

As Ontario continues to endure a second wave of COVID-19, restaurants are being singled out and deserve to understand why. An increasing number of jurisdictions are being targeted with heightened restrictions, including indoor dining closures. Yet no data has been provided that points to restaurants being the source of transmission.

Since the start of the pandemic, restaurants across the country have invested more than \$750 million in new procedures and training, personal protective equipment, sanitizer stations, air purification systems and other means to ensure the highest levels of safety for staff and patrons. National research indicates that 87 per cent of Canadians agree that restaurants are doing a good job of keeping us all safe.

Despite these investments, restaurants are being forced to shut down indoor dining without data that clearly justifies how this will curb community spread. Restaurants provide a safe alternative to private gatherings and government should be supporting their efforts to do so as much as possible.

Restaurants Canada estimates that the indoor dining closures mandated in Ontario's COVID-19 hot spots have so far resulted in:

- Sales losses of as much as 80 per cent for full-service restaurants and more than 40 per cent for quick-service restaurants.
- Tens of thousands of jobs lost across the province:
 - 12,000 in Ottawa
 - 33,000 in Toronto
 - 14,900 in Peel Region
 - 8,800 in York Region

Indoor dining closures in Halton and Durham regions could mean another 8,500 job losses.

Our local restaurants want to be able to pull through the pandemic and continue serving our communities. However, without transparent transmission data and further government support, half of all independent restaurants are at risk of closing within a year.

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Restaurants and the many small and medium-sized businesses that make up Ontario's foodservice sector are a critical load-bearing pillar of the province's economy. Before the pandemic struck, our industry comprised approximately 38,000 establishments, contributing 4 per cent to Ontario's GDP and serving more than 9 million customers every day.

Our industry also supports a wide variety of other businesses across the province, indirectly supporting more than 110,000 jobs and typically spending more than \$13 billion per year on food and beverage purchases, playing a critical role for Ontario farmers and the agri-food sector.

On behalf of Ontario's vital foodservice sector, we are calling for:

- Clear and transparent data to understand what is driving government decisions related to dining restrictions.
- Consultation with industry to address any concerns identified by the data.

Restaurants are key to the province's COVID-19 recovery. Let's ensure we are doing everything possible to help them avoid the devastating consequences of indoor dining closures so they can continue contributing to the economic and social fabric of their communities.

c.c.: The Hon. Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier & Minister of Health
The Hon. Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance
The Hon. Victor Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
The Hon. Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries

Sincerely,

Luke Chapman
Interim President
Beer Canada

Jordan Holm
President
Boston Pizza International

Jeff Newton
President
Canada's National Brewers

Scott Hart
Chief Operating Officer
Drake Hotel Properties

Glenn Brown
President & CEO
Bento Sushi

Steve Demaine
President
Bum Contract Furniture LTD.

Peter White
Executive Vice President
Dairy Queen Canada Inc.

Rob Carmichael
Chief Operating Officer
East Side Mario's

Dan Flanagan
Chief Executive Officer
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Chris Koehler
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Steve Kampstra
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Nivera Wallani
President and General Manager
**Kentucky Fried Chicken Canada
Company**

Mark Findlay
Chief Executive Officer
Lone Star Texas Grill

Sean Bell
Chief Financial Officer
Mary Brown's Chicken and Taters

Carol Goriup
President
Meat & Poultry Ontario

Donna Doohar
Owner
Mildred's Temple Kitchen

Mark Sozanski
Vice President
Montana's

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

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President & CEO
Food Processors of Canada

Mary Chiarot
Vice President & General Manager
Garland Canada, A Welbilt Company

Juanita Dickson
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Gusto 54 Restaurant Group

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Chief Operating Officer
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Pubs**

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Jacques Mignault
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McDonald's Restaurants of Canada

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Director of Sales
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Mohamad Fakih
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Pizza Nova

Todd Barclay
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Restaurants Canada

Brent Poulton
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Randy White
President

Sysco Canada

Ted Moroz
President

The Beer Store

Mark McEwan
Chef/Owner

The McEwan Group

Duncan Fulton
Chief Corporate Officer

Tim Hortons

George Croft
President and CEO

Waterloo Brewing

Frank Hennessey
CEO

Recipe Unlimited Corporation

Paul Bognar
President & Chief Operating Officer

SIR Corp.

Ron Simard
Chief Operating Officer

Swiss Chalet

Bill Horosko
President

Tableware Solutions Ltd.

Kelly Higginson
Executive Vice President of Operations

The CFW Group

Peter Higley
President

The Pickle Barrel

Bruce Miller
President

**The WORKS Craft Burgers & Beer, South
St. Burger, Big Smoke Burger, TOSTO
Quickfire Pizza & Pasta**

John Goard
President

World Wide Wings