



April 28, 2020

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Anne McMullin, President & CEO  
Urban Development Institute (UDI)  
[AMcMullin@udi.org](mailto:AMcMullin@udi.org)

Dear Ms. McMullin:

We have been forwarded a copy of your letter addressed on March 30, 2020, to the Honourable John Horgan, Premier. COVID-19 is impacting all aspects of people's lives, including jobs, savings and most importantly one's own health and the health of loved ones. Thank you for the time you took to write. For the most up-to-date information on supports and services please visit [www.gov.bc.ca/covid19](http://www.gov.bc.ca/covid19).

This global pandemic is also affecting people, communities, businesses and non-profits across our country, and we can only tackle the crisis by working together. Our government is committed to working with our partners across B.C. and Canada to do everything we can to keep all people healthy, safe and supported.

Our government announced a \$5 billion COVID-19 Action Plan to help British Columbians affected financially by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our plan builds on the Government of Canada's plan and is focused on protecting people's health and safety, bringing financial relief for people and businesses alongside the federal government, and building B.C.'s plan for economic recovery in partnership with the business and labour community.

The measures within our COVID-19 Action Plan were an important first step and we will continue to take action to counter the impacts from COVID-19. We are committed to doing what it takes to support people throughout B.C. as we get through this together. Our immediate goal is to provide some relief for businesses struggling with cash flow today. The aim of the federal benefits, B.C. tax deferrals, BC Hydro relief and reduced school tax rates for businesses is to

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provide some breathing room that commercial property owners and their leaseholders need in the short-term.

To build on the COVID-19 Action Plan, our government recently announced it is taking additional measures to support B.C. businesses, non-profits and other organizations through the COVID-19 pandemic by:

- Further reducing the school property tax rate for commercial properties to achieve an average 25% reduction in the total property tax bill for most businesses, providing up to \$700 million in relief. This enhances the 50% reduction to the provincial school property tax rate that was originally announced for classes 4, 5, and 6 as part of B.C.'s COVID-19 Action Plan.
- Postponing the date that late payment penalties apply for commercial properties in classes 4,5,6,7 and 8 to Oct. 1, 2020, to give businesses and landlords more time to pay their reduced property tax, without penalty. For additional information about these recent measures please visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020FIN0020-000703>
- The federal government announced a new Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) for businesses, non-profits and charities, in partnership with provincial and territorial governments. This program will lower rent by 75 per cent for commercial tenants that have been affected by COVID-19, and will be a big help to the thousands of commercial landlords and tenants whose bottom lines have been hit hard by COVID-19. For more information please visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020FIN0024-000754>

Thank you for sharing your experiences and ideas, as we know many businesses continue to face challenges. We will continue to work with business leaders and organizations across the province on how to best support and respond to the needs of businesses of all types and sizes. We will continue to help people, families and businesses so that British Columbians are supported.

Current information on COVID-19 related resources for all businesses at:

<https://smallbusinessbc.ca/article/resources-for-small-businesses-affected-by-coronavirus-covid-19/>. Advisors are ready to help by phone at 1-800-667-2272, email ([askus@smallbusinessbc.ca](mailto:askus@smallbusinessbc.ca)) and daily digital meetups.

For information on BC's Action Plan and other government resources and updates visit:

[www.gov.bc.ca/covid19](http://www.gov.bc.ca/covid19)

To learn more about Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

For resources to help manage stress, anxiety and depression related to COVID-19, visit:

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health-safety/covid19\\_stressmanagement\\_5\\_accessible.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health-safety/covid19_stressmanagement_5_accessible.pdf)

For up-to-date, non-health information, including provincial and federal programs,

call 1 888 COVID-19 or visit <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support>

We also look forward to engaging with you and your members on your ideas and solutions as we work towards economic recovery in our province.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,



Carole James

Minister and Deputy Premier

cc: Geoff Meggs, Chief of Staff