

August 17, 2020

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers Ng, Hussen, McKenna, Joly, Monsef, and Freeland,

Re: Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) Program

Businesses on the main streets and in the downtowns of Canada continue to struggle through the impacts of COVID. Our communities are suffering as our streets do not ring with the usual joy and fellowship of summer. Our business owners are focused on how they are going to survive and hopefully recover.

Some of these businesses have benefitted from the programs you have created, but many have not. We recognize and appreciate what you and your respective teams continue to do, but there is one program that we believe must be further fine-tuned or have the funds re-allocated in a more creative manner.

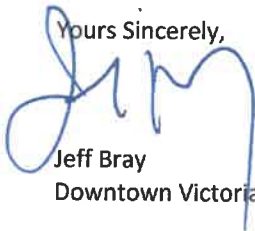
On April 29th, the International Downtown Association – IDA Canada – wrote you to suggest some essential changes to the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) Program. We would like to reinforce the importance of a few points made in that letter:

- Many small businesses have wanted to take advantage of this program but have not had the co-operation of their landlords. We suggest that the program be amended to allow businesses owners to apply.
- The 70% threshold of this program is making it difficult for many of our businesses to apply. We request that this threshold be reduced to 55%.

If you do not believe this program should be altered, we suggest that you take some of the ample funds from it to be shared with BIA/BID/BIZ/SDCs across the country so we can support their local businesses more fully. The professionals who lead these organizations know their businesses well and they regularly create an array of programs which help invigorate those businesses. As a result of COVID, we are already creating programs with their own funds to support space reconfigurations, marketing, training & education, and public space programming. We could use some help!

With the other five-hundred Business Improvement Associations and societies de developement commercial, IDA Canada represents over 250,000 business and property owners in districts which contain billions of dollars in assessment. More importantly, we represent those commercial neighborhoods which have employed literally millions of employees and which have been the very spark plug of community – economically, socially, and culturally. We stand ready to work with all in the implementation of programs which address our current situation and those that will kick-start recovery.

Yours Sincerely,



Jeff Bray

Downtown Victoria Business Association, Executive Director