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Toronto City Councillor
Beaches—East York | Ward 19



The Honorable Doug Ford
Premier of the Province of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Monday January 18, 2021

Dear Premier Ford,

Thank you for your ongoing efforts as Ontario continues this difficult fight against COVID-19. We are writing to you on behalf of Toronto's 84 Business Improvement Areas, representing over 70,000 businesses and property owners across the city. As a community we support the increased efforts to tackle the virus, however, we are also concerned about their effectiveness to contain the spread and inconsistent impacts for small, locally-owned businesses.

Under the latest emergency orders essential retailers - particularly big box stores - are able to sell non-essential items in-store, and after-hours. This puts small businesses at a disadvantage and is a public health concern as it may encourage non-essential travel.

We are asking you to take urgent action by going one step further in the orders and mandating big box stores and other retailers selling essential goods to close off sections of their stores where non-essential items are displayed. Manitoba has implemented this strategy and has seen cases going down since the order went into effect.

We recognize that big box stores need to be kept open to provide essentials goods for folks, especially given the varied geography and access to online shopping across Ontario. But there is also an imperative to be fair with main street businesses who have made incredible sacrifices throughout the pandemic. To even the playing field has been an ask from many businesses we have been speaking with on city-wide calls every Tuesday since the pandemic began.

On behalf of our communities, I hope that you'll review the new public health measures to further curb non-essential travel and to be equitable to all business operators and continue delivering on the support promised to small business owners throughout the health crisis.

Respectfully,

Brad Bradford
Toronto City Councillor
Beaches-East York | Ward 19

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