



April 9, 2020

MP Mike Kelloway

Cape Breton-Canso

Via email: Mike.Kelloway@parl.gc.ca

RE: Canada Emergency Business Account Eligibility Criteria

Dear Mr. Kelloway,

The Strait Area Chamber of Commerce is a not for profit business development organization that promotes, improves, and protects trade and commerce in the Strait Region of Nova Scotia. Our goal is to make the Strait Area one of the best regions in which to invest, live, work and conduct business. Established in 1950, we have over 65 years of experience working with businesses in the region to help them overcome obstacles and seize opportunities. Our membership is strong – 380 and growing, making us a strong voice for business across the Strait Area.

I'd like to thank you for your continued efforts to inform and advocate for the business community in Cape Breton-Canso. Your support is appreciated, and has not gone unnoticed by our membership.

The rapid response of the Government of Canada in dealing with the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic has been well-received by the business community overall. We maintain daily communication with our members to assist them in preparing to deal with the significant impacts to their operations, and in navigating and accessing government programs. The reality is that many are excluded from accessing the assistance they need to survive.

Just over 60% of our membership consists of businesses and organizations with less than 5 employees, spread across a broad geographic region that includes all of rural Cape Breton and parts of the northern mainland of Nova Scotia. The economy relies heavily on tourism and fisheries, arguably two of the hardest hit industries during this crisis. These businesses across all sectors are feeling the pinch of having to layoff staff, pivot business models, and in some cases, close entirely. They urgently need immediate access to credit to keep their businesses viable.



The eligibility requirement of the Canada Emergency Business Account requires that the applicant incurred between \$50,000 and \$1 million in total payroll in 2019. Unfortunately, many of our business members do not meet this threshold, and so it eliminates a desperately needed source of credit. The program is designed with small businesses in mind, but many are feeling left behind and are facing permanent closure. Small businesses are the backbone of our rural economy in northern Nova Scotia; we can not afford to turn our backs on them at this critical time.

Mike, it is with great urgency that we ask the Government of Canada to significantly reduce the payroll eligibility requirement to enable more small businesses to access the loan available through the Canada Emergency Business Account.

I look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Amanda Mombourquette", is written over a horizontal line.

Amanda Mombourquette

Policy Advisor

Strait Area Chamber of Commerce

Cc: Diana Martell, President, Strait Area Chamber of Commerce