{PLACE ON YOUR OWN COMPANY LETTERHEAD}

{DATE}

Premier Doug Ford

Premier of Ontario

Legislative Bldg Rm 281

Queen's Park,

Toronto, ON

M7A 1A1

Premier@Ontario.ca

Dear Premier,

I’m a small business operating in the group travel industry. I don’t need to tell you how devastated the tourism industry has been as a result of the COVID-19 shutdown. But as a part of the group travel industry, I want to tell you that my particular segment of the tourism industry that has been particularly hard hit and I’m asking for your help to get us back on our feet.

I say that we are the hardest hit segment of the tourism industry, and the one that will have the hardest time recovering, not just because we sell travel in groups, creating extra difficulty considering social distancing, but because our company was already struggling before COVID-19 hit due to the labour disruption with Ontario teachers. We had suffered significant losses as a result of the teachers’ action which eliminated almost all student travel last fall.

And then COVID -19 shut us down completely.

## We are making every effort to restart our business, but there are two issues that are simply beyond our ability to resolve on our own, and that is why I’m writing to you today to ask for your help.

## Our association, the Ontario Motor Coach Association (OMCA) has proposed two measures to the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries that we strongly support and that we believe will enable us to get back on our feet and participating in the rebuilding of Ontario’s tourism industry.

First, after exhausting our reserves just surviving the last five months, we need help to invest in new marketing efforts to attract people back to group travel. OMCA has proposed that the Ministry provide grants of up to 50% to tour and coach operators for their marketing plans up to a maximum of $40,000 per operator. These marketing plans would have to be approved by the Ministry and would have to be focused on promoting Ontario tourism only.

Our second issue is the need to make group travel reasonably priced despite social distancing requirements. With a coach taking less than its normal capacity we need to be able to bridge the gap between fewer paying customers, increased costs for coach operators to sanitize buses and to provide a safe environment, and the normal costs of running a coach.

## To solve this problem, and get the groups rolling again and supporting the rest of Ontario’s tourism industry, we are asking that the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries establish a $400/day subsidy to coach operators for Ontario destination trips in order to help reduce the transportation costs for groups. Groups that support the rest of the industry by taking people to restaurants, attractions, events, sports, hotels, and almost every other part of Ontario’s diverse tourism and recreation sector.

While we accept that we won’t be able to achieve normal volumes for several months yet, we believe with your government’s support in these two ways, we will be able to at least re-open and play our role in rebuilding Ontario’s tourism industry. Without it, our future is dark, and very uncertain.

Premier, you often speak about the importance of the little guy, the small business doing its best in a difficult economic environment. You are perfectly describing my business. Normally, we are self reliant, confident and we adapt to changing circumstances with the nimbleness that is the hallmark of every successful small business. But the one-two punch of the teacher’s job action and the COVID-19 pandemic have put us back on our heels and we need your help. Please, do what you can to help us help the tourism industry rebound from this devastating shutdown.

Sincerely,

Cc: Minister MacLeod,

Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries

Minister.MacLeod@ontario.ca