



The Honourable Chrystia Freeland  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance  
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister  
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May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**SUBJECT: Relief Programs & Border Reopening Plan**

Dear Minister Freeland,

The recent federal budget announcements that support the rebuilding of Canada's travel economy were encouraging and supported by members of Ontario Motor Coach Association (OMCA) thank you. Support for Destination Canada, tourism specific funding provided to the Regional Development Agencies, as well as commitments to festivals and events will all assist in recovery across Canada.

For OMCA's members it is vital that the financial supports available through Canada's Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and the Canada's Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS) be extended until revenues can replace these subsidies. The planned subsidy reduction and program wind down is simply too steep and too fast for our member's survival. These programs have been vital business lifelines as the majority of our businesses continue to experience devastating revenue declines.

Given the impacts of Covid's third wave on our economy and the absence of a coordinated border reopening plan, our members are facing the possibility of having to rely exclusively on limited local business and a summer with ongoing restrictions. This will significantly reduce our recovery trajectory and our ability to replace these subsidies with revenues. OMCA members have faced sharp decrease in cashflow and increased debt loads. The limited opportunity presented by a restricted summer will not be sufficient for businesses to accrue the liquidity required to make it to summer 2022, our next peak travel period.

The federal government has been present from the early stages of the crisis, offering relief to Canadian businesses. In a recent member's survey, the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that the extension of CEWS and CERS was vital to their survival. We are asking you to please maintain the existing program's support levels for the travel economy's hardest-hit businesses until summer 2022.

Specifically:

**EXTEND THE CEWS & CERS PROGRAMS** until summer 2022 at current rates and make lockdown support available for those businesses that are affected the most. We believe that maintaining these programs exclusively for hardest hit businesses in our industry represents a low risk for the government. In fact, over 95% of the economy is experiencing recovery, and only sectors that are truly the hardest hit would remain eligible for these programs.

**BORDER REOPENING PLANS** will require the federal government to coordinate with the provinces and territories for the travel economy to recover. OMCA members are dependent on the ability of Canadians and visitors to move freely without restrictions and therefore need a clear border reopening plan and time to prepare for the gradual return of travelers.

I thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. I remain at your disposal to discuss them further and to collaborate on solutions for our sector's recovery.

Sincerely,



Vince Accardi  
President, Ontario Motor Coach Association

CC: Hon. Melanie Joly, Minister of Official Languages and Economic Development  
Hon. Omar Alhabra, Minister of Transport  
Hon. Bill Blair, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness