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Chair and Members of Peel Regional Council
10 Peel Centre Drive
Brampton, Ontario
L6T 4B9

VIA EMAIL

Dear Mr. Chair and Members of Council,

Re: Use of Section 22 Orders to Close Businesses in Peel Region

The Mississauga Board of Trade (MBOT) is aware of the announcement of the Medical Officer of Health Dr. Lawrence Loh issuing a Section 22 Order under the Health Protection and Promotion Act to close businesses that have had a minimum of five COVID related cases directly linked to spread in the workplace over the previous ten days.

[Peel introduces expedited workplace closures to stop spread of variants and protect workers and our community - Region of Peel \(peelregion.ca\)](https://www.peelregion.ca/news/2021/04/21/peel-introduces-expedited-workplace-closures-to-stop-spread-of-variants-and-protect-workers-and-our-community/)

MBOT is supportive of measures that keep workplaces healthy and safe and free of COVID cases and spread. We also recognize that contracting COVID is variable and that most is community-based spread and not related to places of work. We also recognize the resources of the Peel Health Unit and those of our hospitals are stretched dangerously thin.

From the beginning of this pandemic Peel Public Health has always taken a case-by-case approach to COVID outbreaks and has used the measure of wider-community impact in its decisions around business closings. This approach has been reasonable and fair and should continue to be the primary driver of any decision to close a business.

Businesses and workplaces are very different depending on the sector of the economy, the physical layout of the workplace, hours and days of operation and the way in which COVID protocols are operating and the effective use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other measures to ensure proper physical distancing and internal operations.

We do have concerns that the Order appears to be very arbitrary in nature and we hope that Peel Public Health will use its discretion on a case-by-case basis to order a business closure after taking into consideration all the issues and facts. We are also concerned that due to lack of resources, the Chief Medical Officer will issue a Section 22 closure order before an investigation can commence and thereby, potentially closing a business when the 5 cases identified were not as a result of workplace spread.

Closing businesses not only harms the business itself but potentially thousands of workers who will be displaced by the closure.

MBOT is a strong supporter of Government Paid Sick Leave and has advocated for this for many months. We urge the Federal and Provincial Governments to develop a program that provides paid sick days to workers to stay home when sick, waiting for the results of a COVID test and having to quarantine for any reason during the length of this pandemic.

To support a business re-opening after an Order, MBOT calls on Council and Peel Public Health work with the other Orders of Government to provide free rapid antigen screening tests at those workplaces for a period of six months and further provide an adequate number of devices to screen all essential workers on site, twice per week. Screening workers when they return to work is a significant way to keep COVID out of the workplace.

We recognize that Peel Public Health is in a very difficult situation and the want to institute effective public health measures under Section 22. We all want workplaces to be healthy, safe and free of COVID.

We sincerely hope these measures starting tomorrow will be made prudently and responsibly to ensure that businesses and workers are treated fairly.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Wojcik', enclosed within a large, loopy oval stroke.

David Wojcik
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