



**FREDERICTON
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**
— The Voice of Business —

364 York Street, Suite 200
Fredericton, NB
E3B 3P7



19 February 2021

Hon. Ted Flemming
Minister of Justice and Public Safety
Marysville Place
P. O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB

Dear Minister Flemming:

Re: Reclassification System Under NB's Phased Recovery Plan

I am writing today to follow up on comments that Premier Higgs made during the Q & A portion of the State of the Province Address earlier this month and to seek clarity concerning his comments about creating a reclassification mechanism for businesses under the NB Recovery Plan.

The business community through the NB Employer's Coalition first requested such a mechanism in a letter to former Justice and Public Safety Minister Urquhart in May 2020. We wrote:

"Now that the dust has begun to settle and it is clear that New Brunswick businesses will be operating under the recovery plan for quite some time, we think it is appropriate to refine the plan and phases further based on more information than government had time to consider originally. With input and data from businesses and individuals, the government will be able to more precisely define and categorize activities or sectors to best reflect "on-the-ground" realities. The activities and sectors described in the current plan are quite broad, which is leading to uneven results in the business community.

These are not minor distinctions for small businesses. The difference between opening a week earlier or later or getting closed down or not during a future outbreak greatly matters - especially after the past three months."

When I asked Premier Higgs whether the government could create a mechanism to look at these businesses and consider reclassifying them, his response was:

"Yes, we can look at these businesses and in the sense of what they provide we did evaluate these business...it allowed us to learn more about the pandemic and how the virus is spread...I am always interesting in looking at each case, not generalize....we should be willing to have that discussion and look closely at their operation and how they work or not work and throw



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everyone into the same bucket....people should apply, we should look at that, it should be part of our ongoing discussions with public health.”

You can listen to this exchange starting at the 2:03:00 mark of the event recording (<https://www.frederictonchamber.ca/insight/2021/02/12/2021-state-of-the-province-address/>).

We appreciate the premier’s comments that demonstrate his understanding of the importance of these distinctions and the material effect that being placed in one category or another can have on business operations. Businesses have worked hard to keep their staff and clients safe, to have operational plans in place and to keep people employed. A reclassification mechanism is a way that the government at large can show they understand the realities of business and are willing to act to help them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Krista Ross'.

Krista Ross, CEO
Fredericton Chamber of Commerce

cc: Hon. Blaine Higgs, Premier, Province of New Brunswick
cc: Hon. Arlene Dunn, Minister Responsible, Economic Development and Small Business; Opportunities New Brunswick
cc: Sadie Perron, CEO, Opportunities New Brunswick; Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Small Business
cc: Mike Comeau, Deputy Minister, Department of Public Safety