

November 23, 2020.

Dear Premier Ford,

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your endless hours of work, dedication, and collaboration during these unprecedented times. As the umbrella organization of Toronto's eighty-four Business Improvement Areas, who in turn represent over 73,000 Toronto businesses, I feel compelled to share our thoughts regarding the parameters for the twenty-eight-day Toronto lockdown. Respectfully, the logic is seriously flawed and lacking.

The decision to implement a lockdown just before the busiest time of year for business is disappointing to say the least. Many of our local, small businesses rely heavily on the holidays to turn a profit before the slowest months of January and February. After such a detrimental year to small business, the chance for them to open their doors and ride the shop local and seasonal wave feels like it has been ripped from their hands. I truly feel that this second lockdown will be the final nail in the coffin for many of our local businesses that make Toronto such a vibrant, and unique city.

The most frequent questions asked by our members that quite frankly we have no answer for is, why should large, multi-national, American chains be deemed essential and permitted to stay open while offering thousands of non-essential items including but not limited to books, toys, and clothing; yet a local book store on Queen Street is forced to close their doors?

Main Street businesses have been exceptional at following and even implementing additional safety measures within their establishments to help mitigate and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Local businesses can manage store capacity and social distancing requirements much more readily than a big box store ever could, yet our customers are left looking in from the outside.

Now more than ever is your voice and collective engagement needed in support of local main street businesses. We are counting on you.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Kiru", written in a cursive style.

Mr. John Kiru  
Executive Director, TABIA