



July 25, 2016

Municipality of Chatham-Kent
P.O. Box 640, 315 King St. W.,
Chatham, Ontario N7M 5K8

Attention: Mayor Hope and Council

Dear Mayor and Council:

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am sharing with you as leaders of our municipality, the findings of meetings held with our Small Business members. Although the information will not be of surprise to you, it is important to recognize the direct feedback through open dialog that was expressed during our working sessions; as you would be aware the Chatham Kent Chamber hosted event roundtables in concert with our Small Business: Too Big to Ignore initiative. Our Small Business participants clearly conveyed the critical importance that Municipal Council must act on these key issues for the betterment of Chatham-Kent and its business community.

It is a tremendous concern to us and to you as well, that our local small business proprietors have voiced their distress over provincial initiatives currently being undertaken. It was passionately communicated directly and overwhelmingly the concerns that our provincial decision makers simply "*do not understand*" the duress small businesses are facing. With recent changes made or announced, the number of provincial initiatives are destructively costing local Chatham Kent business the ability to grow and expand. There is unprecedented unease of their future survival within our local markets.

Recognizing that Council and Administration will have representation at the upcoming AMO Conference in August, we are forwarding these priority concerns to bring forward during your meeting sessions with Provincial Ministers.

1. High cost of electricity

. An unparalleled concern stemming from the removal or decrease use of natural gas; creating a significant increase in cost to keep the doors open. We want action that creates an effective and financial viable alternatives that won't continue to erode innovation, business growth and expansion opportunities.

2. Climate Change Action Plan

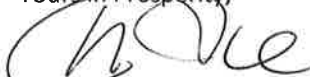
. Destructive decision that decrease and eliminate any of our competitive advantages, in particular, competing against other American border towns with unreasonable cost increases to energy infrastructure and overhead that limits our attractiveness to solicit new industry and jobs to our market.

3. Education System

. The lack of trades and skills programs and the endorsement thereof, within current secondary school curriculum. The specifics of curriculum offerings and capacity is entirely local. With funding being dictated by enrollment numbers and is a direct reflection of demographic scale. It is a fact that Chatham-Kent is an aged and declining population as being the root issue. Provide incentive to work with municipal government in small rural settings to increase their competitive attractiveness driven to bring families to those communities that are further supported by strong diverse learning curriculums.

Notwithstanding, several other concerns of provincial nature expressed, we are requesting you to bring forward the aforementioned priorities at the upcoming conference for the sake of your constituents and our small business community.

Yours in Prosperity,


Christopher June
Chair

