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Ontario NDP Caucus • Groupe parlementaire du NPD de l'Ontario

June 15, 2020

Hon. Paul Calandra
Government House Leader
Room 223, Main Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A2

Minister Calandra,

We have had the opportunity to review the government's draft legislation enacting a partial ban on commercial evictions. A legislated ban on evictions is long overdue however, we feel this legislation falls far short of what is needed in the current crisis, and falls far short of what small businesses and their representative organizations have been asking for. Specifically:

- Rather than a comprehensive and effective ban on commercial evictions during this crisis, the draft legislation bans commercial evictions only if a landlord is both eligible for Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) and has not applied for it. Small businesses and landlords have been clear that the CECRA program is not working. It is confusing, overly restrictive and inadequate. A vast number of small businesses will not qualify despite significant loss of income. Tying a ban on commercial evictions to the failed Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program will leave far too many small businesses still at risk of eviction.
- The legislation does not protect tenants for the duration of the crisis. The draft legislation is retroactive until June 3, but many business groups, like the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association have said clearly that it should be retroactive to mid-March. The COVID crisis hit small business months ago. If this Bill is going to be of any use it has to cover that period.

If the government is willing to make changes to address these shortcomings, New Democrats will be prepared to expedite passage of the legislation through unanimous consent. If the government intends to table the draft legislation without changes, New Democrats will insist on an opportunity for the House to consider amending the legislation and address these serious shortcomings.

In recognition of the urgency of this issue we are prepared to sit at anytime including additional days this week, to ensure legislation is passed as quickly as possible. We believe with cooperation on the part of all parties a bill could be passed by Thursday of this week. We would however prefer to pass an improved bill with unanimous consent on Tuesday.

I am available anytime to discuss this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Gilles Bisson, MPP

Official Opposition House Leader

Ontario NDP Caucus Services

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