

To Essex council members,

This letter is in response to the restrictions put in place for the Windsor and Essex County region. There are a number of issues that are gravely concerning to our community.

Upon reopening, small businesses have and continue to prove they have the means to protect their environment by following the safety guidelines put in place. To their benefit and with current data we understand that small businesses are not to blame. We are however seeing a blanket approach that is unfairly discriminating against and punishing small businesses without explanation and justification.

It should be noted the cases coming from these businesses, no matter the zoning, have not changed. It is unjust to impose further restrictions and heavy regulations on sectors not responsible for the problem to begin with. It would be logical therefore, for the Province and Health Unit to take a more measured approach by providing guidance and specifically target sources of community spread using evidence backed by conclusive data.

The vast majority of small businesses has and continues to follow public health guidelines and have seen no outbreaks and minimal infections. If we look at things objectively, the best-case scenario would result in a reduction of less than 1% transmissions. This does not justify shutting down small businesses or even placing these businesses in any level other than green. They are the backbone of our economy. The measures being taken put severe restrictions on already hurting business. These businesses have already spent thousands of dollars in a time of declining revenue.

There is no logical reason why a big box retail store remains open, without contract tracing or other measures put in place while the small businesses are required to take a number of measures to open their doors. It would seem reasonable that environments without contract tracing would be hard to track acquisition, however that should not be at the detriment of small businesses.

In closing, we must also look at the secondary effects of Covid. It is important to consider the consequences this is having on individuals in our community such as increased mental health issues, suicides, increase in drug and alcohol use, a rise in domestic abuse cases, poverty, missed medical procedures, etc. We must do right by our community as a whole.

Kim Dennison