

To the Business Community in Port Alberni

On behalf of the Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce may I extend our appreciation for the sacrifices that many are making right now. In our role as a Business Organization supported by hundreds of local businesses we are hard at work on the Advocacy Front. Now more than ever our Businesses and the people working within them **NEED** our voice. People have often said to us "what do I get for my membership?" That's always been a tough, and somewhat uncomfortable question to answer as we send people away with nothing but a receipt for their payment. Some years we've included a sticker. But today as we push forward with our goals, and our mandate to assist our businesses we're now able to demonstrate that we're part of your insurance plan. A big part.

Over the past days the CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce - Perrin Beatty, a familiar name to many in Canadian Politics, has been meeting virtually with MP's from across the Country including our PM. His messaging, on behalf of more than 200,000 Chamber Members from across the Country, including more than 300 here who support us, and them by default, has helped steer the response that the Government is making. And we're not done. We don't like the 10% payroll relief fund as it's simply not enough, but, it's on the right path. We also pushed hard for Tax deferrals and many other measures that you learn about daily. On the Provincial front the CEO of the BC Chamber of Commerce - Val Litwin is doing the same thing as Mr. Beatty only his daily communications are with MLA's and the Premier of the Province. We pushed hard for virtually all of the Provincial responses and from a local perspective we take pride in knowing that it was under our push that the EHT (Employers Health Tax) payment for many of our businesses is now delayed. We have also taken a lead role in advising Government to delay implementation of the next level of Minimum Wage increase. We support the increase for the betterment of our populations but right now our Businesses need to concern themselves with cash flows so that they can re-open to our public and re-employ you and your families in the weeks to come. We'd like to learn of the success of that push. Stay tuned for more on it.

From a local perspective your Chamber of Commerce is leading a task force supported by Community Futures Alberni-Clayoquot and the City of Port Alberni on a direct connect, via phone, with as many local businesses as possible. Fact is, we want to drill down and learn from our local businesses how this is affecting all. Talking to people is key to that. Simply put, we can't be your voice if we don't hear your voice.

I conclude by offering my personal support for each business owner in Port Alberni. I'm hearing your stories and while most are heart-wrenching and disturbing I'm also learning of incredible resilience

that identifies why these people are the leaders that they are. They are visionaries. They see a roadblock, they stop, they think, they plan and then they determine a best way around. Yes, it's likely that we'll see some carnage once this is done but we'll also see a rebound that may shock all of us. After all, we live in Port Alberni, what else would one expect. Stay well, listen to the Medical Experts and Government leaders, and offer cheers to our front-line Healthcare workers.