

The Honourable Monte McNaughton  
Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development  
14<sup>th</sup> Fl., 400 University Ave  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1T7

Sent by Email

November 24, 2021

**Ref: Layoff Recall Deferral for Meeting and Convention and Food and Beverage Sectors to end of June 2022**

Dear Minister McNaughton,

We are writing on behalf of Ontario's tourism and hospitality industry regarding a further extension of job-protected unpaid infectious disease emergency leave (IDEL). The sectors we represent across all regions of Ontario include accommodations, food and beverage, meetings and conventions, resorts, live events, attractions, recreation, transport operators, and culture and heritage.

Over the past twenty months, the Government of Ontario has been responsive to the needs of workers and the hardest-hit businesses in the tourism and hospitality industry as our industry recovers from the devastating uneven impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank the Government of Ontario and particularly the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development for enacting measures which have reduced the financial burden on tourism and hospitality businesses during this precarious time. This includes extending unpaid IDEL until December 31, 2021, temporarily freezing layoffs to protect employees, allowing them to be reinstated, be free from penalty, and earn credits for length of employment and seniority; and protecting businesses from the obligation to issue costly termination or severance pay after the end of the layoff period.

While we are appreciative of the initial extension of unpaid IDEL to December 31, 2021, which has delayed the layoff recall deadline to April 1, 2022, this will no longer be enough for meeting and convention and food and beverage sectors. While recovery is underway, the pace of business in meetings and conventions and food and beverage is not yet sufficient to begin recalling laid off staff in these two sectors at the current timeline. Activity is slow due to the longer booking window for meetings and conventions and the usual winter weather-related slowdown for food and beverage.

According to a November 2021 survey from the Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association (ORHMA), 65% of hotel members reported a pessimistic outlook for event bookings for the first half of 2022; clients are either not making decisions about bookings or being told that events are not likely. If the layoff recall deadline is not extended, the requirement to issue costly termination/severance pay will put many businesses in this segment in financial jeopardy, slowing down the province's economic recovery.

To protect jobs, the financial solvency of our operators, and the rebuild of vibrant made-in-Ontario tourism and hospitality experiences, **we therefore recommend an additional three-month extension to unpaid IDEL, which would extend the layoff recall deadline to the end of June 2022.**

We would like to meet at your earliest convenience to discuss our recommendation further.

Thank you for considering the contents of this letter. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



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Chris Bloore  
President & CEO  
Tourism Industry Association of Ontario



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Elenis". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Tony Elenis  
President & CEO  
The Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and  
Motel Association (ORHMA)