

## October 2020 Ontario Ministry of Finance Budget Consultation Submission

Government support for businesses and their employees through the COVID-19 pandemic helped ensure everyone was supported through the acute crisis.

We are now in a longer-term chronic phase that requires us all to think and act differently to these unparalleled challenges and changes. We must shift to planning for, and executing on, a safe and **sustainable** growth strategy.

### **The Government of Ontario must ensure that we have a robust business investment climate**

We need an environment that encourages business investment & economic growth. A thriving business climate is one that rewards risk taking and entrepreneurship. It is imperative that the government resist the temptation to introduce cost saving measures or raise business taxes in order to reduce the debt it has incurred, curbing the passion and creativity that is a critical cornerstone in rebuilding our prosperity. We urge you to make permanent some of the temporary measures you introduced during the pandemic. This includes allowing restaurants to deliver alcohol online, allowing e-commerce options for legal cannabis retailers, and extending commercial patio spaces. Providing municipalities with the authority to swiftly put these types of measure in action has also been vital to local economic revitalization.

### **The Government of Ontario must continue to invest in Infrastructure**

The past few months have demonstrated that broadband is crucial to ensure businesses, public sector services, healthcare providers and students can remain productive with access to digital online tools. This is particularly essential in rural and remote regions where the quality of service is quite poor. We urge you to accelerate the \$150 million that was committed to broadband and cellular infrastructure, and to work closely with telecommunication companies to speed up their current expansion.

Additionally, infrastructure investment is needed in the Innovation Corridor through the delivery of 2-Way all day GO service by 2025. This shovel-ready project will have a significant impact on the province's economy by bringing an infusion of \$1 Billion in construction and procurement to the area over the next 5 years. The Innovation Corridor is home to many sectors such as Advanced Manufacturing, Financial Services, Agrifood, Auto, Research and Tech that will be relied upon for economic recovery and job creation.

As referenced in the Ontario Chamber's [She-Coverly Project](#), the COVID-19 crisis is having a disproportionate economic impact on women. Re-employment continues to be slowest for women with children between the ages of 6 and 17. This is deeply concerning, not just for women but for the economy. We welcome all government efforts to ensure a safe return to school and firmly believe that investment in equitable child care is of utmost importance.

**Lastly, The Government of Ontario must Help Business to Grow**

More needs to be done to increase access to capital for our SME's. When they can grow, so too can our economy. The government should continue to work on reducing trade barriers across provinces, encouraging growth into new markets and providing support to businesses as they grow internationally.

Now more than ever we need governance that takes a more sophisticated and comprehensive approach to solving problems and undertake reforms and initiatives to build back better. As private business and citizens have pivoted and adapted to this extraordinary situation, so too must governments. We implore you to move outside the patterns of thinking and acting we have been accustomed. The high level of collaboration among governments, businesses and civil society towards managing this pandemic and its aftermath will continue to be the most effective way to achieve a safe and sustainable growth strategy to support Ontario's economic recovery.