



Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

May 27, 2020

Dear Premier Ford,

Thank you for all that you and your government have done, and continue to do, throughout this pandemic to support all Ontario citizens and businesses, and thank you as well for your unwavering leadership.

The Real Estate Staging Association (RESA) is the trade association for real estate staging professionals. We provide support, resources, and educational opportunities for home stagers. Throughout the current pandemic, RESA has provided documents, resources, and guidelines to home stagers worldwide to help to control the spread of COVID-19 and ensure that safe work practices are in place. Home stagers are now providing remote services wherever possible, including video call based consultations and other virtually-directed services. Due to the nature of the home staging services, as the name indicates, some services would require entering a person's home. Home stagers are well-positioned to limit the number of persons in a home at a time, as well as follow COVID-19 recommended safety protocols such as health checks, social distancing, face coverings when distancing is not possible, and, proper hand-washing and hygiene to help to control the transmission of COVID-19. Home stagers can also continue to utilize remote service options when possible to limit contact with clients.

I am writing on behalf of thousands of small business owners in Ontario who are real estate stagers. Their contributions to the real estate industry have a huge financial impact, as the process of staging homes for sale reduces the homeowner's time on the market and commands top dollar when sold. This helps to provide a much-needed stimulus to our current economy. In a time of virtual open houses, home staging helps to showcase the home and create an experience for prospective buyers by combining expert styling and proven marketing practices.

The impact of COVID-19 on our industry is significant. Without stagers, properties will take longer to sell and they won't sell for as much money. Homeowners will lose equity in their homes and the financial impact on our economy will be immense.

The residential real estate industry in Canada contributes over \$250 billion to the Canadian economy annually, and the driving force of this contribution are the professionals who service the real estate industry, many of whom are self-employed small business owners. Additionally, in a study by Altus Group Economic Consulting and the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA), \$64,100 in ancillary expenditures are generated by the average housing transaction in Canada over a period of three years from the date of purchase. This translates to an additional \$10 billion economic support to housing-related businesses each year.

Self-employed real estate stagers are currently experiencing devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic as the non-essential business order is severely restricting their ability to conduct business. While real estate stagers are not essential



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to complete a real estate transaction, they play a significant factor in the overall success and financial return of that transaction.

**Based on the current essential workers list, section 1 regarding supply chains indicates that supply chain services must be “necessary to operate”. I am asking that your government amend the current essential workers list to explicitly include “Real Estate Industry Related Services” to allow home stagers to return to work, and service a vital Ontario industry.**

Sincerely,

Shauna Lynn Simon, Ontario Provincial President  
Real Estate Staging Association  
shaunalynn@btshomes.com  
(519) 496-4301