



December 8, 2020

The Honourable Brian Pallister
Premier of Manitoba
204 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

ORIGINAL SENT BY MAIL

Re: Covid lockdown for small businesses

Dear Premier Pallister:

The Canadian Jewellers Association (CJA) is the national trade association representing the jewellery and watch industry since 1918. We are the voice of the Canadian jewellery industry, providing leadership in ethics, education and communication. The CJA promotes consumer trust and assists our members to follow best business practices.

As Premier of Manitoba, your decision taken on November 20th to close all non-essential retail has had a devastating effect on jewellers in Manitoba as they are no longer able to conduct business with consumers, albeit with the Public Health requirements, in the most important weeks of their selling year. Meanwhile, big box retailers, who also sell jewellery and watches, are allowed to conduct business untethered by the restrictions put on small businesses.

The CJA appreciates the grave situation of this Covid-19 pandemic. To that end, jewellers have complied with their Provincial Public Health requirements. They have outfitted their bricks and mortar businesses with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), barriers, cleaning and disinfecting protocols, measured the social distancing requirements inside and outside their place of business, put controls at the entrances to their businesses to monitor how many consumers can enter their establishment at any one time, (in some cases have reverted to “by appointment only”), provided additional masks for consumers, trained their employees in the handling and selling of jewellery and watches under such requirements. These measures were taken at the expense of these businesses. In a normal year, jewellers look to the last quarter of the year to make or break their financial year as the holidays approach. During this year it is of paramount importance that these jewellers be able to salvage what may be their only chance of surviving this catastrophic health and economic crisis.

The CJA believes that jewellers are in as good as, if not a better position, than big box retailers to ensure the health and safety of the consuming public and their employees. The fabric of the Canadian jewellery industry is for the most part, one of small businesses, with the retail portion often referred to as “moms and pops”, family businesses employing spouses and other family members.

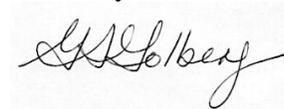
The CJA is asking you, as Premier of Manitoba, to lift the lockdown for jewellery businesses with the understanding that they must meet all Public Health requirements. Furthermore, we ask that in the unfortunate event of further lockdown decisions you may undertake in 2021, that you do not apply such restrictions to small businesses that do not pose any more of a public health threat than big box retailers, or indeed grocers and liquor stores.

The CJA joins you in our concern for the health and welfare of all Manitobans. We are asking you to ensure that decisions made to ensure this priority during this pandemic are reasonable and fair to all small businesses that do not pose more of a threat than the aforementioned retail environments.

We look forward to your consideration and response to our request.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. Golberg", is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Gail Golberg, Chair
Canadian Jewellers Association

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Beatrice Sturtevant", is written in black ink.

Beatrice Sturtevant, Managing Director
Canadian Jewellers Association

Cc. The Honourable Cameron Friesen, Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living