

# Canada's Innovation Corridor Business Council

August 13, 2021

Hon. Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building  
Queen's Park Toronto ON M7A 1A1  
Via Email: [premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)

Dear Premier,

**RE: Canada's Innovation Corridor Business Council Urges Ontario to Adopt a COVID Safe Pass**

We are writing to you on behalf of Canada's Innovation Corridor Business Council (Corridor Council). We are a coalition of chambers and boards of trade representing business in the Greater Toronto-Hamilton Area to Waterloo Region innovation corridor. Considered Canada's and the Province's largest economic zone, the Innovation Corridor consists of hundreds of thousands of Ontario businesses that generate more than \$360 billion in annual GDP.

This week, as COVID-19 numbers increase, Ontario's COVID-19 Science Advisory Table confirmed that we are indeed facing the fourth wave of the pandemic. On behalf of the Corridor Council, we want to be unequivocal when we say that Ontarians, our businesses and our economy want to avoid another general lockdown at all costs.

Due in large part to the hard work of your government, today Ontario is better equipped to deal with the pandemic than we were at its onset. We have a deeper understanding of the virus, our hospitals are more prepared, our vaccination rates are high and importantly, we are now aware of global best practices and mitigation strategies being adopted around the world; mitigation strategies that include digital proof of vaccination or a recent negative COVID test to access non-essential businesses.

Premier, like you, the Corridor Council believes in the right of individuals to choose whether or not to get vaccinated but we also believe that we need a better way of managing this virus, one that allows for our economy to remain open and for life to resume. This is now particularly important since it appears that unvaccinated members of our communities – including children under the age of 12 – are at higher risk of transmission and may develop increased severity of illness.

Digital tools, like the Toronto Region Board of Trade's [COVID Safe Pass \(https://www.bot.com/Portals/0/PDFs/COVID\\_SafePass.pdf\)](https://www.bot.com/Portals/0/PDFs/COVID_SafePass.pdf), are being used around the world because they allow for digital alternative methods of verifying COVID safety either through a recent negative test or through proof of

vaccination. Their popularity has to do with their effectiveness at protecting individuals' privacy while allowing economies to stay open.

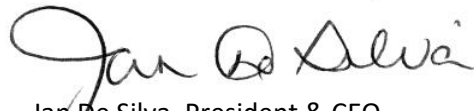
The Corridor Council is encouraged that the federal government coming to the plate with a vaccine passport for international travel use that could be adopted by the provinces and territories should they so choose. Premier, on behalf of the businesses of the Innovation Corridor, we ask that you expeditiously work with the Government of Canada to institute some form of a digital COVID Safe Pass system that will keep our economy open.

No one is denying that lockdowns are effective, but they are blanket measures with unimaginably high social and economic costs. Luckily, with tools like the COVID Safe Pass, they are no longer our only option. Premier, on behalf of the business community of the innovation corridor, we urge your government to adopt and implement a digital proof of vaccination program like the COVID Safe Pass as soon as possible and to provide guidelines to businesses on how it should be used.

Respectfully,



Ian McLean, President & CEO  
Greater Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce  
Co-Chair, Canada's Innovation Corridor Business Council



Jan De Silva, President & CEO  
Toronto Region Board of Trade  
Co-Chair, Canada's Innovation Corridor Business Council

cc. Hon. Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier & Minister of Health  
Hon. Vic Fedeli, Chair of Cabinet & Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade