

From CEOs of leading innovation economy enterprises

Date: March 25, 2020

To: Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Hon. Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance
Hon. Victor Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade

Dear Premier Ford and Ministers Phillips and Fedeli,

Ontario is a technology powerhouse. With strong support from governments, our tech and innovation sectors have stepped up to the plate and emerged as important sources of well-paying jobs, economic growth and our provincial GDP.

Tech employment has grown rapidly across Ontario. Toronto is the fastest-growing tech market overall, surpassing Washington, Seattle and San Francisco combined – with a total of 241,000 tech industry jobs in the GTA alone. Waterloo and Hamilton tech employment has grown 40% over the past five years. Ottawa has the second-highest concentration of tech talent in North America, with 9.9% of its workforce employed in this sector – just behind San Francisco.

And these are good jobs. Across the industry, tech wages in Ontario averaged \$78,070 in 2018 – 51% higher than the average private-sector wage.

This didn't just happen. The growth of Ontario's tech sector is a success story shared by successive governments stretching back to the creation of MaRS and Communitech under the Harris government and continuing to the present day.

Now, all this hard work and economic impact is threatened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ontario government has already responded with swift action and the deployment of some critical resources. But more is needed.

Without further intervention, many promising new ventures that are tackling everything from climate change to cancer treatments and vaccines may be forced to close their doors over the next 12 to 18 months. The pinch is already happening: Supply chains are being disrupted and consumer spending is slowing, creating economic risk for our province.

Ontario's tech leaders believe the ecosystem needs our provincial government to continue to show leadership by taking immediate and longer-term measures to weather this storm, and drive innovation, economic growth and job creation through the recovery.

These measures include:

- Supporting the immediate cash-flow needs of companies to reduce expenditures, preserve cash and maintain top talent and jobs;
- Increasing and rapidly deploying additional funding through established programs and investment vehicles;
- Providing greater flexibility for companies with an existing funding relationship and track record, to enable the tech ecosystem to continue innovating.

Ontario's tech sector was created with the help of the provincial government, but maintaining momentum requires this government to sustain its support during this time of crisis. That's why innovation hubs and tech groups are sending this letter to the province, urging support for these companies in the coming months. We are calling for swift, targeted measures that will help companies improve cash flow and keep tens of thousands of Ontarians employed.

Focused, collaborative action will help high-growth, innovative tech companies to emerge from this crisis in position to grow Ontario's economy and create jobs.

Signed,
(see signatory list below)

PROPOSED ASSISTANCE MEASURES FOR ONTARIO'S INNOVATION ECONOMY

There are a number of ways the Ontario government can continue to strengthen the tech sector through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. These include:

Supporting the immediate cash-flow needs of companies to reduce expenditures, preserve cash and maintain top talent and jobs:

- Offering generous payroll subsidies – at least 70 percent of wages – similar to subsidies already offered in England and Denmark
- Deferring payroll taxes, and deferring remittance of corporate and payroll taxes together with no-interest, deferred payment loan vehicles for businesses
- Allowing the deferral of WSIB premiums
- Increasing procurement of goods and services from Ontario ventures, and requiring recipients of stimulus funding to prioritize the adoption of made-in Ontario innovations
- Implementing measures for rent abatement and interest-free credit availability including the creation of a no-interest, deferred payment loan vehicle for businesses

Increasing and rapidly deploying additional funding through established programs and investment vehicles:

- Rapidly deploying additional funding to current recipients that can demonstrate proven track records for delivery, enabling them to immediately address cash-flow challenges
- Building our strong pipeline of high-growth firms by continuing to invest in promising startups through the MaRS IAF, and providing additional support to later-stage firms

Providing greater flexibility for companies with an existing funding relationship and track record, enabling the tech ecosystem to continue to innovate:

- Creating more flexible funding terms, conditions and schedules for companies that currently benefit from government funding, and the network of Regional Innovation Centres that support them, enabling companies to address key challenges and adapt to rapidly changing market conditions
- Retaining the Ontario Innovation Tax Credit (OITC) and the Ontario Research and Development Tax Credit (ORDTC), and working with the federal government to accelerate reimbursement through SR&ED, OITC and ORDTC

More broadly, we believe the government of Ontario is ideally positioned to further influence important federal measures as outlined in this document:

<https://www.marsdd.com/media-centre/letter-tech-leaders-appeal-for-greater-support-during-covid-19/>

Name		Company	Job Title
Yung	Wu	MaRS Discovery District	CEO
Iain	Klugman	Communitech	CEO
Michael	Tremblay	Invest Ottawa	President & CEO
Claudia	Krywiak	OCE	President & CEO
Claudio	Rojas	National Angel Capital Organization	CEO
Paul	Salvini	Accelerator Centre	CEO
Sherry	Colbourne	Spark Commercialization & Innovation Centre	CEO
Anne	Toner Fung	Innovation Guelph	CEO
Yvonne	Pilon	WEtech Alliane	President/CEO
Adam	Castle	WEtech Alliance	Director Of Venture Services
John	Proctor	Martello	CEO
Erin	Kelly	Advanced Symbolics Inc.	CEO
Sharon	Lewinson	RideShark Corporation	President & CEO
Scott	Simpson	bitHeads inc.	CEO
Deepak	Dutt	Zighra	CEO
George	Chamberlain	Pleora Technologies Inc.	Co-Founder and CEO
Doug	Carwardine	Rockport Networks Inc.	Chief Executive Officer
Patrick	McGowan	BlackBox.global	CEO
Mike	Monteith	ThoughtWire	CEO
Tyler	Eyamie	Fusebill	CEO
Eric	She	DLS Technology Corporation	President
Melissa	Chee	ventureLAB - Tech Innovation Hub based in York Region	President and CEO
Paul	Dumais	ITmanager.net Inc.	CEO
Andrew	Klotz	Beyond Media Digital Inc.	CEO
Paul	Vallee	Tehama	CEO
Niek	Van Dierdonck	RedLore	CEO
Nic	Boileau	Ekidna Sensing Inc	President & CEO
Kristie	Kiatipis	ventureLAB	Program Coordinator
Behdad	Bahrami	Edgecom Energy	Founder
Puneet	Tiwari	Evichat	CEO
Kate	Dickson	Primped	Cofounder
Amir	Hoss	EAIQLE	Founder & CEO
Mike	King	Stripe Studios Inc.	Founder
Yvonne	Lau	Retainify	Founder
Brendan	Crowley	Micromensio Inc.	CEO
Sachi	Komarasamy	Intelligence	Founder & CEO
Karen	Wong	TakuLabs Ltd.	Co-Founder & CEO
Rajiv	Prakash	Shouut Technologies Inc.	President
Suzanne	Simpson	Human Resource Systems Group Ltd.	Founder and CEO
Ashkan	Rahimi Kian	I-EMS GROUP LTD	CEO
Nathan	Mah	Mero Technologies	CEO/Co-Founder
Sarah	Hartkorn	Primped Beauty Technologies Inc.	Co-founder
Sridhar	Kotari	VassuTech	President
Robert	Deline	Innovation Initiatives Ontario North	Executive Director
Corey	Ellis	Growcer	CEO & Co-founder
Michael	Weider	SHOEBOX LTD	CEO
Raza	Jafri	3DCityScapes	CEO
Devashish	Paul	BluWave-ai	CEO
Garry	Brownrigg	QuickSilk	Founder & CEO
Mirhassan	Daryabeigy	Edgecom Energy	Director
Sebastian	Hadjiantonou	Incuvers	CEO
Amir	Ghods	SMATS Traffic Solutions	CEO
Bree	Holloway	Nurtured Life Go Inc.	CEO
Gabriel	Rubio Maldonado	Welbi Technologies Inc	Head of Operations & Product
Anne	Genge	Alexio Corporation	CEO
Sandra A	Spiller	Trakker Services Canada, Inc	CEO
Jason	Mayhew	Momentum Shift Inc	President
Scott	Wright	Click Armor	CEO
William	Thompson	RVezy	CEO
Ben	Lacroix	StadiYUM	CEO
Pierre	Azar	Smarttransitmedia Inc.	CEO
Tim	Sherstyuk	GBatteries	Chief Commercial Officer & Co-Founder
Keren	Moynihan	Boss Insights	CEO/Cofounder
Luke	Moynihan	Boss Insights	CTO/Cofounder
M.	Amir-Ahmadi	Advanced Process Automation Technologies Inc.	CEO
Jonathan	Wong	CybernetIQ	Director, Operations
Sherif	Koussa	Software Secured Cautus	CEO
Elizabeth	Audette-Bourdeau	Welbi Technologies Inc.	CEO
Obaid	Ahmed	Botmock Inc.	Founder, CEO
Mahshid	Yassaei	Evenset inc	Co-founder and CTO
James	Basnett	Answer Intelligence	Founder
Fahim	Sheikh	GrowthVectors Inc.	CEO
Julia	Slanina	Treehouse Digital Health Inc.	CEO
Anferny	Chen	Dataraction Inc.	CEO
Mostafa	Mahmoud	Tartan AI	Board Director
Terille	Houston	SmartCone Technologies, Inc	COO
Karén	Karapetyan	Customized Technologies - 3DAvatar.ca	Founder
Laura	Mindorff	Wicket	Co-founder + COO
Daniel	La Russa	Realize Medical Inc	Operations Lead
Peter	Misek	Framework Venture Partners	Partner
Stephen	Genge	Alexio Corp	CISO

Kim	Atkinson	Ontario SEO	Owner
Tarique	Al-Ansari	Paystone.com	CEO
Michael	Foley	SavvySale	Co-Founder
Ashraf	Ghadban	Mandil Ventures	Principle
Adrian	Ferreira	Rize Health	CEO and Co-Founder
David	Billson	rTraction Canada, Inc.	CEO
Nahuel	Bulian	Rize Health	CTO
Glendalynn	Dixon	Glendalynn Dixon Professional Services	Owner
Marc	Morin	Auvik Networks Inc	CEO
Mike P.	Banovsky	TechAlliance of Southwestern Ontario	EIR
Isabelle	Trouquet Carata	ADEXFLOW INTERNATIONAL SOFTWARE INC	Vice President
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Bruce	Carruthers	Cord3 Innovation Inc	Chief Strategy Officer (CSO)
Michael	Litt	Vidyard	CEO
Jennifer	Smith	Cineplex Digital Media	SVP Technology & Operations
Dennis	Mazajlo	Race Roster	Manager, Partnerships
Alex	Weiner	WRELM Data	Partner
Bogdan	Raic	Stan AI	Co-Founder
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Matt	Grossi	Orca Intelligence Inc.	CEO
Aaqib	Usmani	Tasteport	Founder & CEO
Kostyantyn	Khomutov	GBatteries Energy Canada Inc.	CEO
Ella	Mar	P2Peak Technologies	CEO
Tarek	Moharram	Moharram Ventures Inc.	Founder & President
Christopher	Misch	Green Dot Group / ChargerQuest	CEO
Ian	Haase	Motif Labs Ltd	Founder, CEO
David	Kroetsch	FLIR Unmanned Systems (formerly Aeryon)	VP UAS Technology
Richard	Cunningham	Markham Board of Trade	President and CEO
Sam	Andary	s2h D2R-Collect	CEO
Amy	Hastings	TextNow, Inc., Snaport Inc. (d.b.a. Sortable), Crucial Interactive Inc. (d.b.a. Contobox)	Legal Advisor
Rakesh	Tiku	inField Solutions	President & CEO
Niraj	Bhargava	NuEnergy.ai	CEO
John	Gosson	Blumind.ai	Founder & CTO
Alain	Goubau	FarmLead Resources Ltd	COO & CFO
David	Strucke	Media Sonar	CEO
Lindsay	Schneider	Arcane	CEO
Christopher	Reid	Sortable	CEO & Founder
Courtney	Hance	The Branding Firm Inc.	Owner & President
Taylor	Ablitt	Diply	CEO
Madan	Kanala	SnowM Inc.	CEO
Tony	Chahine	Myant	CEO
Michel	Codere	Pure Goals	CEO
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Debbie	Gamble	Interac Corp.	Chief Innovation Officer
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Mara	Uzun	Sideffekt	CEO
Michael	Worry	Nuvation Energy	CEO
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Liz	Watson-Palermo	Virtek Vision International	Director, Human Resources
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Paul	Hogendoorn	FreePoint Technologies	Founder and Chairman
Brad	Beattie	start.ca	CFO
Mitch	Dawson	Raven Studio	President
Lindsay	Sage	sagecomm	Co-Founder & Senior Strategist
John	MacBeth	TryCycle Data Systems	Founder & CEO
Lauren	Lake	Bridgit	COO & Co-Founder
Emily	Nielsen	Nielsen IT Consulting Inc	President
Jenn	Schurer	upSpace	CEO
Pierce	Ujjainwalla	Knak	Founder & CEO
Ryan	Kelly	Ascend	Founder
Lucio	Barreto	Stronghold Services Corporation	CEO
Pam	Banks	RIC Centre	Executive Director
Jason	Flick	You.i TV	CEO/Co-Founder
Michael	Delorenzi	Northern Commerce Inc	President
Jenessa	Olson	STMNT Inc.	CEO & Co Founder
John	Stroud	CrowdBridge	CEO
Mohammad	Delavar	BIM Manager Eyes Enterprise (BIM MEE)	CEO and Founder
Matt	Rendall	Clearpath	CEO / Co-Founder
Karen	Chalmers	Big Blue Bubble	Marketing Director
Kris	McCarthy	FanSaves	Co-Founder & COO
Ibraheem	Khan	Smarter Alloys Inc.	CEO
Jordan	Jocius	Founder Institute	Director
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Sonya	Meloff	Sales Talent Agency	President & Co-founder
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Keith	Murray	Autodata Solutions	Chief Operating Officer

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Moktar	Yusuf	Relomigo	CEO
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John	Findlay	Launchfire Interactive Inc.	CEO
Joseph	Thornley	7Gengage	CEO
Nathan	Nagy	Experify	Co-founder, UX Researcher & Designer
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Vivek	Burhanpurkar	Cyberworks Robotics Inc	CEO
David	Carter	Innovation Factory	Executive Director
Armin	Faraji	Node App	Founder
Scott	Runté	Launch Lab	CEO & EIR
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Alun	Davies	iol systems inc.	President
Majd	Karam	Needful	CEO
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David	Ciccarelli	Voices.com	CEO
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Andrew	McClenaghan	Digital Echidna	President
Nick	Hollinger	Visitor Queue	CEO
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Brian	Maxfield	ODEA Inc	President
Andrew	Millar	Relogix	CEO
James	Campbell	TechAlliance	EIR
Brian	Foster	RH Accelerator	Co-Founder
Fadi	Patros	Ditanu Inc.	President
Melissa	McInerney	tbk Creative	CEO
Lynn	Davis	Alegria 3 Inc	President

Mark	Healy	Instant Autographs Inc.	CEO
Khaled	Boqaileh	LabsCubed Inc	CEO
Rajiv	Muradia	EcoGreenCrops	Founder &CEO
Jeff	Kushner	Epiphan Video	CFO
John	Pensom	PeopleInsight Workforce Analytics	CEO & Co-Founder
John	Cappuccitti	Velocity	Director
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Leslie	Rechan	Solace	CEO
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Andrew	Waitman	Assent Compliance	CEO
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Gavin	Carter	TechInsights	CEO
Eric	She	DLS Technology Corporation	President
Chris	Bailey	FileCatalyst	CEO
Greg	Anderson	Microchip Technology Canada Inc.	Sr. Strategic Global Account Manager
David	Ross	Ross Video	CEO
Gary	Margolis	Notogen Inc	CEO
Parth	Patel	Writi Inc.	CEO
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Jacqueline	Baptist	Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation	Marketing + Business Development
John	Bell	Greyter Water Systems	Co-Founder/VP Business Development
Randy	Osei	Athlete Technology Summit	Director
Michael	Pickering	CloudConstable Incorporated	CEO
Carl	Mascarenhas	JoeZoo	CEO
Iakov	Kogan	Panisolar	President & CEO
Sal	Naran	Savvy	Co-CEO
Edward	Kitaura	ARDA Power Inc.	VP Operations
Shannon	Graszat	Innovation Factory	Client Services Manager
Jennifer	Gauvreau	Innovation Factory	Marketing Manager
Andrew	Sinclair	OtoSim	Retired CEO
George	Botos	Genemis Laboratories Inc	CEO
David	Potter	Spyder Works	Executive in Residence: Innovation and Human Capital
Karl	Wiklund	Vitasound Audio	Sr. Research Engineer (fmr.)
Christian	Weedbrook	Xanadu	CEO
Mark	Mikulec	Joydrop Ltd o/a Mikutech	Founder and Chief Technical Offer