

December 17, 2009

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty  
Premier of Ontario  
Office of the Premier  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario

Dear Premier,

We are writing you to discuss the interruption of funding for two very valuable programs that have helped to grow and sustain local businesses.

In October, your government quietly ended funding for individuals looking to start their own business. The two programs in question provided funding and advice on everything from accounting to tax laws to how to put together a business plan and provided access to a business adviser for a full year.

Of particular concern was the discontinuation of the Self-Employment Benefit program (SEB). At the time of the announcement, the SEB program had a budget of \$62-million for this year and included 3,000 individuals enrolled in the program provincially. These applicants now are at a loss as to where they may access financial support and advice on starting a business.

At the time the program was discontinued, Minister Milloy claimed the government had to focus on retraining laid-off manufacturing workers. We find this curious and self defeating since the Self-Employment Benefit program is an important step to get people working and provides entrepreneurs with a financial cushion, especially in the first crucial year, allowing them to re-invest profits into their new businesses.

The local experience has proved extremely successful. Since 1995 the SEB program has helped to generate 600 businesses start-ups in the community and in the period between 1998 and 2009, on average, there have been between 50 and 55 SEB applications filed a year.

We are also at a loss as to why the province would see it necessary to stop the SEB program while investing another \$78 million in the Second Career program.

While your government's overall response to the global economic downturn has been remarkably effective in investing in job-creating stimulus for our economy, we nonetheless urge you to re-institute the SEB program at the earliest possible date.

Sincerely,



Steve Irwin  
CHAIR OF THE BOARD



Debbi M Nicholson  
PRESIDENT & CEO

Cc: The Honourable Rick Bartolucci, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services,  
MPP Sudbury  
France Gelinias, MPP Nickel Belt  
Mayor John Rodriguez, City of Greater Sudbury  
Ontario Chamber of Commerce