



P.O. Box 1734, Lake Cowichan, B.C. V0R 2G0  
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December 30, 2024

Hon. Diana Gibson,  
Minister of Jobs, Economic Development  
& Innovation  
Provincial Government,  
Victoria, B.C.  
[JEDI.minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:JEDI.minister@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Minister Gibson:

My family and I are the owners of a small business in Lake Cowichan, B.C. I am directing this letter to you on behalf of many small businesses throughout B.C. who are facing dire circumstances, not the least of which is due to the lack of government protection or regulations.

I am aware of the British Columbia Tenancy Act, which governs commercial leases in this province, in fact I have a copy... But it falls short of offering protection regarding lease or rent increases.

As I am sure you will agree, small businesses are the 'backbone' of communities in this province. We pay taxes, hire staff, train workers, contribute to local charities; in fact to remove small businesses from the landscape would be akin to destroying most towns in B.C. or any province, for that matter. We are told by government from municipal to federal that we are invaluable to our respective communities and play a large part in the economic development of our areas.

Yet when it comes to regulations that can protect our very existence, much more effective legislation is needed, specifically rent or lease increase protection.

There are rent increase protections for tenants through the Residential Tenancy Act, but nothing exists for small business. Landlords see us as prime targets to feed their insatiable appetites for greed. This recently happened in our small town, resulting in closure of a 40 year business. My family business is facing the same fate...a greedy landlord who wants a 120% increase, including triple net and an additional percentage annual increase. We would move, but in this small town we cannot find another space.

But this should not be allowed. Why can't there be controls in place to protect commercial tenants similar to those controls for housing? It is just as important to protect the jobs of workers, which in many cases are supplied by small business, as it is to protect their places of

tenancy. We are not the only business facing this dilemma. Couple this problem with supply chain issues, plus other increases in operating costs and small business is slowly disappearing in virtually every province in Canada.

We suggest:

- a) an increase of 50% is reasonable for either an existing tenants or a new tenant
- b) disallow imposing triple net, which means a lessee is responsible for a portion of every expense of the lessor. This also means that a landlord who does not perform any repairs can pocket that triple net portion and make even more profit...which is exactly what is happening with us in our own business.

This is a serious situation and is happening many times with small businesses. We are slowly disappearing.

We ask that you bring in reasonable legislation before we are all gone.

Yours truly,

GERARD'S SPECIALTY FOODS LTD.

Glenda J. Osborne-Burg, Manager

Cell: 250-466-5124

- cc Sonia Furstenau, Green Party  
John Rustad, Conservative Party  
David Eby, Premier  
Allistair McGregor, MP Cowichan Valley  
Lorna Vomacka, Councillor, Lake Cowichan  
Cowichan District Chamber of Commerce  
British Columbia Chamber of Commerce  
Canadian Federation of Independent Business (C.F.I.B.)