



April 19, 2021

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee
Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

We know that you and your government are continuing to have to make some very challenging decisions. We know the numbers are alarming and we support all measures that will help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Having said that, we write to you today to express our extreme disappointment in the decision Friday afternoon (April 16th) to close most outdoor recreational amenities, including golf.

There is **overwhelming evidence** that outdoor activities, conducted with proper protocols, are not only very safe, but also critically important for the physical and mental well-being of Ontarians. Dr. Isaac Bogoch, an Infectious Diseases Physician and Scientist concluded “outdoors is safe, indoors is not safe ... nobody is getting this infection from golfing!” on the April 19th broadcast of Golf Talk Canada with Mark Zecchino & Bob Weeks.

Golf proved in 2020, and in early 2021, that it is well-positioned to provide Ontarians with some much-needed outdoor exercise, mental stimulation and safe social time with family or friends. As the #1 participation sport in Ontario, in 2020 alone **there were well over 20 Million rounds of golf played by over 1.8 Million golfers in Ontario with ZERO known cases of COVID transmission at a golf course.** The data is clear:

- Golf is safe.
- Golf is naturally aligned to physical distancing.
- Golf has a clear set of well established, very safe protocols.
- Golf has important health benefits – the studies are clear about golf – it is good for your heart, it relieves stress, and it can improve your mental health.
- And many recent articles from doctors across the province indicate that the science is clear ... outdoor transmission is extremely rare.

We have been in regular communication with your team over the last few months, consistently reminding your government how safe the sport of golf is. We reiterated in those messages our commitment as a golf industry to continue to be a LEADER in Ontario by providing a safe recreational activity for your constituents. We remain committed to that goal. We will continue to hold ourselves to very high standards to ensure that golf remains the safe recreational option that it has proven to be.

On behalf of the 800 courses, 110,000 workers and over 1.8 Million golfers in Ontario, we implore you to allow golf and other safe outdoor recreational amenities to be available to Ontarians. Right now, Ontario is the only jurisdiction in North America where you are not allowed to golf. Other regions understand how safe golf is, and how important it is to the physical and mental well-being of their constituents. In Ontario, we have





proven without a shadow of a doubt we can operate safely, and we know how critical it is to the physical and mental well-being of Ontarians.

We are happy to engage in direct discussions with your team, if there are additional protocols that are needed for golf and other amenities to be open during this stay-at-home order.

Respectfully,

Mike Kelly
Executive Director
Golf Ontario
mkelly@gao.ca

Shawn Hunter
Regional Director
National Golf Course Owners
Association Canada (NGCOA)
shunter@ngcoa.ca

Melanie van der Hoop
Executive Director
Professional Golfers' Association of
Ontario (PGA of Ontario)
melanie@pgaofontario.com

Al Schwemler
President
Ontario Golf Superintendents'
Association (OGSA)
alschwemler@gmail.com

Paul Bussiere, CCM
Ontario Branch Director
Canadian Society of Club Managers
(CSCM)
PBussiere@coppinwood.com

CC: All members of the Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee, including:

Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Chair, Minister of Finance and President of the Treasury Board
Honourable Vic Fedeli, Vice Chair, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
Honourable Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
Honourable Jeff Yurek, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Honourable Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation
Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Honourable Greg Rickford, Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and Minister of Indigenous Affairs
Honourable John Yakabuski, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
Honourable Laurie Scott, Minister of Infrastructure
Honourable Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Government and Consumer Services
Honourable Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development
Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction

