



**Retail Gasoline
Dealers Association
Of Nova Scotia**

192 Wyse Road, Suite 7
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B3A 1M9

March 20, 2020

Honourable Stephen McNeil, MLA
Premier of Nova Scotia
One Government Place, 1713 Barrington Street
Halifax, NS B3J 2A4

Re: COVID-19 Provincial policy recommendations for the Independent Gasoline Dealers

Premier McNeil,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Independent Gasoline Retailers that make up the Retail Gasoline Dealers Association of NS, we recognize the efforts that all levels of government are taking to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, there are unique and urgent needs for the Independent Retailers, who are considered an essential service in the many communities they serve, especially so in rural parts of the province.

Independent Retail Dealers are not only facing the rapidly changing and challenging context presented by COVID-19 but additionally are facing the global reduction in the price of oil. Many of our retailers have laid off staff, and reduced hours of operation as a direct result of the UARB's use of the "Interrupter Clause", with four significant street price reductions in just two weeks. These price reductions have been implemented without regard for impact on the retail dealers' retail margin or inventory of product on hand. As a result, all are losing money on every litre sold. Some retailers will be forced to close their businesses. Attached to this letter are quotes from independent retailers that are representative across the province. This dramatic reduction of gas prices resulting from the use of the interrupter mechanism means the average independent retailer is losing between 10 to 40 cents per litre.

On behalf of the Independent Retailers, we are calling on your government to address the impacts on their businesses by:

1. Immediately reviewing the implementation of the Interrupter Clause and its purpose. *i The "Interrupter" is the mechanism available to the Board to respond to sudden and significant spikes, up or down, in petroleum product prices. The Board will consider using the "Interrupter" for a petroleum product when the market price for that product fluctuates by a range of +/- 6 to 8 Canadian cents per litre versus the weekly benchmark price set by the Board, and the change is sustained.*

2. Creating immediate and directed fiscal-relief funding for Retailers facing a crisis or

bankruptcy.

Dealers recognize that closing their business will have grave consequences in the communities they serve, as well as impacting their own livelihood and future viability. As community-minded business owners, they want to continue operating and serving their communities, but cannot sustain this in the present price-setting environment as well as the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.

We are reaching out to our Independent Retailers daily to learn more about the specific challenges the pandemic is creating and the special needs they have for support. We will continue to share what we are hearing from Independent Retailers and will work with your government. As Executive Director, I am available to work with various government officials and am participating in the COVID-19 Business/Employee team for Halifax. This communication is welcome and helpful for general support to our industry.

We do ask that this urgent issue specific to our Independent Retailers be given immediate consideration.

Sincerely,



Shannon Trites
Executive Director
Retail Gasoline Dealers Association
Cell:902-880-8899
C.C

Hon. Karen Casey, Minister of Finance and Treasury Board
Hon. Labi Kousoulis, Minister of Labour and Advanced Education
Hon. Chuck Porter, Minister, Municipal Affairs and Housing
Hon. Leo. A. Glavine, Minister, Communities of Culture, and Heritage
Hon. Lloyd Hines, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal
Hon. Geoff MacLellan, Minister, Department of Business
Hon. Kelly Regan, Minister, Community Services,
Hon. Randy Delory, Minister of Health and Wellness

Hon. Bernie Miller, Deputy Minister, Department of Business

Hon. Patricia Arab, Minister of Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal

Ms. Wanda Harrie, Manager of Administration and Audit, Service Nova Scotia

B.C.C. Retail Gasoline Dealers Association Board of Directors

i The “Interrupter” is the mechanism available to the Board to respond to sudden and significant spikes, up or down, in petroleum product prices. as quoted from the Bulletin “the Interrupter” on Service Nova Scotia website. The Board may issue general policies, directives, and bulletins consistent with the Petroleum Products Pricing Act and the Regulations.

Quotes from Independent Retailers

Doucette's Service Station Ltd.

#37718 Cabot Trail

Ingonish Beach, NS BOC 1LO

902-285-2029

ingocapergas@bellaliant.com

March 19, 2020

Due to current world and market events please be advised to expect sudden and/or unannounced closures, reduced hours of operation, reduced days open, reduced products and/or services. These are uncertain times and decisions are uncertain. Please understand these conditions are beyond our control. We will reassess daily and make decisions based the information at hand. Unfortunately, we fully expect these events to worsen.

Please take care.

I need help now.

Yesterday I laid off my employees. I am working for free. Rural retail Fuel will soon stop. Three other Sites: Ingonish Irving, Fitzgerald’s XTR and Omar Dixon XTR are also critical..... We are the only retail fuel sites from either Bras D’Or or Baddeck to Cheticamp.

Thanks,

Mike Doucette

McNeill’s Napa Autopro & Service Centre

707 Highway #2 Elmsdale, NS

902-883-9968

March 20,2020

Morning,

In the last 30 days gas has dropped 39.4 cents per liter and diesel has dropped 25.2. Please feel free to check my math. According to PEI we are an "essential service" gas stations and automotive repair. We are counting on our oil company to step up and support us through this. The seed needs to be planted on what we as an industry are going through with whoever needs to know. Like I said on Wednesday this is only the beginning but knowing there will be support on the other end is a necessity. Business wise we should shut down now but as an essential service and being a big community supporter we will continue to operate day by day. "You never go wrong by doing the right thing" and today we feel we will continue to operate and help keep the community moving forward through this.

Roy & Beth McNeill

Thimot, D Service Centre Ltd
8762 Hwy 1 Meteghan Centre,
NS B0W 2K0
djthimot@hotmail.ca

Very challenging times, both mentally and financially. Changing from split service to self service next week due to staffing problems. Installing a 'sneeze guard' tomorrow morning. Staff is getting scared of what's coming.

Daniel Thimot