



Office of the Warden

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February 1, 2021

Honourable Doug Ford, Premier
Office of the Premier
Legislative Bldg. Room 281
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Via e-mail: correspondence.premier.gov.on.ca

Dear Premier Ford:

It is our pleasure to write a letter of support for The Snow Resorts Association of Ontario and its 58 members. We understand that the Association continues to work closely with the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture industries – via a newly struck Ski Industry Working Group - to propose updated reopening guidelines to be presented to the Public Health Measures Table and Ontario's Chief Public Health officer for consideration following the shutdown/state of emergency.

The working group is following a sector-wide process and template provided by the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture industries. As part of this process, all Ontario ski areas have committed to the following enhanced adaptive measures to be implemented upon re-opening:

1. Only allowing access to indoor buildings for use of the washroom
2. Provide only essential food services; only allowing take-out, curbside, or delivery
3. Limit access to rentals, repair, or retail; only allowing curbside pre-ordered pick-up
4. Limiting numbers of passholders or ticket holders on premises
5. Reduced capacities and participant numbers by monitoring and controlling an allowable time spent in physically distanced lift lines
6. Continued practice and required use of COVID-19 safety controls (*including enforcement of [Alpine Responsibility Code](#), and [Ski Well Be Well](#)*)
7. Not marketing international, interprovincial and interregional travel

These extra measures are designed to support the Province's desired health outcomes, to provide ski area communities with safe access to our outdoor recreational amenities, and to help our employees get back to work. Further, the significantly reduced local capacities on-mountain, experienced local pass holder cohorts, and local-only marketing will ensure that our local health care system capacities will be protected. The proposal is currently under review by the Ministry of Health and the industry is asking for ski areas to once again be recognized as an Outdoor Recreational Amenity as part of Stage 1 (Grey) Regulations (O. Reg. 82/20).

Grey County supports the safe reopening of ski hills under these heightened restrictions after the stay-at-home order is lifted. We have witnessed the tremendous efforts by our local ski hills, led by Blue Mountain Resort, to ensure proper protocols are in place, and want nothing more than their every success in delivering on this commitment.

Reopening will be a critical step to help alleviate the capacity shift experienced from the closure of ski hills to our many outdoor areas, which are often unregulated open spaces. This shift is having a detrimental effect on both our land and community of landowners, many of whom are private residents offering their properties for use to maintain well known provincial assets such as the Bruce Trail.

Even more concerning than the overwhelming capacity concerns is the economic impact this closure is having on our region. Eight of the nine private ski clubs in Ontario are located in our region, resulting in an alarming 10,000 jobs lost both directly and indirectly; a number which continues to grow. This is worrisome news for an industry already plagued by an ongoing long term labour shortage crisis, and the negative effects of trust and support among the workforce are certain to persist far past the pandemic resolve.

On behalf of Grey County Council, I am offering our support for the collaborative measures taken by the 58 members of Ontario Snow Resorts and the recommended measures established to ensure ski hills are able to safely open once the stay-at-home order is lifted. In addition, Council also believes, at the appropriate time, it critical that the industry be granted a window of at least one week notice to prepare for reopening as the work to onboard the thousands of seasonal staff laid off cannot be reasonably achieved in less time.

Thank you for your consideration, understanding and support.

Yours truly,

Selwyn Hicks

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cc: Hon. Lisa McLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Kevin Nicol, President Ontario Snow Resorts Association
Andrew Siegart, President Blue Mountain Village