

## Small Business Too Big To Ignore: Chamber of Commerce

Nearly 3 million Ontarians are employed by small businesses of 100 or less employees, but the rising cost of doing business in the province is stunting their growth

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC), has launched Small Business Too Big To Ignore, a campaign that highlights the important contributions of small businesses to our communities and investigates the top barriers to small business growth.

Coinciding with the launch of this campaign, the OCC released its report, Top 3 Obstacles to Small Business Success, aimed at starting a conversation about the underlying challenges that are weighing on small businesses and stifling job creation.

In the report, the OCC cites the rising cost of doing business as a major impediment to small business growth. In fact, OCC survey results show that one in twenty businesses in the province expect to close their doors in the next five years due to rising electricity prices. In addition, 38 percent will see their bottom line shrink, with the cost of electricity delaying or cancelling investment in the years to come.

"Rising electricity prices is just one of the many elements adding to the cost of doing business in the province," said the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. "The Aurora Chamber of Commerce has launched this campaign to take a look at how we can mitigate these types of costs by engaging both government and business leaders in a productive conversation to the answer the question 'what exactly is ailing small business?'."

In addition to the rising cost of doing business, the report also lists key infrastructure gaps and a lack of access to skilled workers as the top three obstacles weighing on small business. "Building a 21st century workforce has been a cornerstone of our advocacy efforts for quite some time," said the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. "We've seen tremendous progress on this file over the past few years but we recognize the need to foster greater connections between skilled workers and employers."

On Tuesday, August 16, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce is hosting a roundtable consultation with small business owners throughout the community to identify the barriers that they face.