

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **TRADE SHOWS, COMMERCIAL EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS ARE ON LIFE SUPPORT**

TORONTO, ON – The Canadian Association of Exposition Management represents over 500 producers, venues, and suppliers of commercial events – also referred to as trade shows, consumer shows and/or expositions. The business events industry, including commercial events, directly employs 229,000 people across the country and contributes \$33 billion in direct spending annually to local economies. Expositions contribute to increased business development, support for the tourism and transport industries, and drive research, innovation, and professional connections across countless industries.

The commercial events space has been one of the most impacted sectors in the pandemic. There is no work-from-home option for expositions. Unlike retail, gyms, and restaurants, trade shows and consumer shows have not been permitted to re-open to any degree. While the vaccination rollout has given the exposition sector reason to be hopeful, the immediate future still looks incredibly bleak. This reality, combined with the seasonal nature of commercial events and the lead time required to plan and prepare trade and consumer shows, means that a drawn-out restart and recovery for the sector must be anticipated, understood, and addressed by government support programs.

“In the Government of Ontario’s re-opening plan, there are large sections of this economy that have been left behind. We’re seeing retail and restaurants re-open this week, and while we’re thrilled to see the economy re-open, we’re concerned – trade shows were mentioned in stage 3 of the re-opening plan in Ontario, but we have been given no information as to what that will look like for our sector.” says Bianca Kennedy, President of CAEM. “We need answers, we need guidance, and we need comprehensive details about how to proceed if the government wants these industries and the jobs they create to exist post-pandemic” Kennedy referenced.

The sector is committed to a safe restart and is well-prepared to rigorously implement health and safety standards as required by local officials, yet CAEM members have predicted that continued restrictions throughout 2021 – with no additional direct financial supports - will result in more layoffs, business insolvencies and insurmountable levels of debt. Furthermore, the collapse of the travel industry, including reduced airline schedules, mandatory testing and quarantines, and advisories against interprovincial travel, will further discourage the confidence of individuals who might consider travelling to events as restrictions are slowly lifted. Add to that the uncertainty surrounding the Delta variant causing a potential fourth wave which could result in an extension of public health orders and restrictions in the months ahead. It is clear a potential comeback and the road to recovery for the exposition sector is impossible in 2021.

*“The future is uncertain for Canadian Association of Exposition Management members” says Kennedy “We need a strong indication that the government has a plan for the sector, it feels pretty strongly that we have been forgotten. We represent hundreds of thousands of employees, billions of dollars in the economy, it’s time we finally had our voices heard,”* Kennedy urges government to work with the industry in order to deliver sector specific re-opening plan.

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