



March 30, 2020

John Tory  
Mayor of Toronto  
City Hall, 2nd Floor  
100 Queen St. W.  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Email: [mayor\\_tory@toronto.ca](mailto:mayor_tory@toronto.ca)

RE: Cancellation of the National Home Show (co-located with Canada Blooms) & Exhibitor Relief

Your Worship,

Dating back to 1951, the Home Show has partnered with Exhibition Place, (and through it the City). It provides an opportunity for local business and homeowners to interact, to buy and sell home related goods and services, and to inspire & entertain people living in this wonderful city. The Home Show, the Big One (formerly the National Home Show and the Toronto Home Show), is the largest home & garden event in North America and is a tradition for almost 160,000 attendees annually, as well as being an economic engine for local business and the region. In 2019 the attendees indicated their intent to spend over \$1 billion dollars in the coming 12 months with some 675 participating exhibitors. Unlike many other shows, the Home Shows operate only in the GTA, and are Toronto owned and operated.

For the first time in its history the show was forced to cancel hours ahead of opening, following the announcement by the Provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health and subsequent guidance of Toronto Public Health. This, of course was the right thing to do, but it has had disastrous consequences for the Home Show, and more importantly for the exhibitors, most of whom are small local businesses and employers.

Not surprisingly these businesses are asking for full refunds as the show did not open, and therefore the product was not delivered. The financial hardship experienced by the exhibitors (and the Home Show itself) is unique given the very nature of the trade show business, where all costs are incurred in advance of the show opening, from space rental, and booth construction to products being offered at the event. (Likewise show production expenses like rent, media buys, rigging and decorations are all paid in full & in advance.)

The Home Show is a vital and often irreplaceable part of these businesses' model, especially for seasonal businesses launching in the spring. It is used as a marketing and lead source to sustain their business throughout the year. Unfortunately, due to the double hit of the show closure and the current state of emergency, their normal sources of revenue are being restricted as they rely heavily on face-to-face interactions. Furthermore, these companies are now paying to store stock purchased for the show.

In order to assist these businesses we are committed to directly reimbursing all of the rent refunded by the Enercare Centre to our exhibitors. To date, the Enercare Centre has committed to only partially refunding the rent. We have advised our exhibitor partners of our intention to pass these funds along immediately upon receipt.



Your Worship we recognize and appreciate the efforts that all levels of government have undertaken to support businesses during this unprecedented and challenging time. The opportunity to support the full and expeditious refund of Enercare rent paid by The Home Show, The Big One, is unique to Toronto and we encourage and request your support for the following to assist our exhibitors and ensure that the Home Shows continue to be a strong economic multiplier for the City:

1. Secure the full rent refund from the Enercare Center. Together we have a unique opportunity to do more and provide much needed assistance to these businesses by ensuring that 100% of the rent is refunded. This would amount to an additional \$540,000 being made available to the exhibitors, providing additional financial resources at a crucial and, in some cases, period of time when survival of some of their businesses are in question.
2. The Home Shows, like many trade & consumer shows, have been an anchor tenant and a feature at Exhibition Place for 69 years. We would like for there to be a 70th, 71st, 72nd.... and continue to create a vibrant market for these local businesses and boost the local economy. We may be unable to do this without your help and partnership. Given the uncertain environment, particularly related to the length and duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, or similar circumstances in the future, we would also request the cancellation clause for the upcoming Shows, taking place at Enercare Centre, be reviewed. Allowing the show to cancel with full rent relief 6 weeks prior to the scheduled opening (just before costs escalate) would mean that under such extreme circumstances we could refund exhibitors more of their money and save everyone additional costs.

I will contact you to follow up and to provide you with any additional information you may require.

Thank you for your strong leadership during this period, it is greatly appreciated and respected.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Duncan Payne', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Duncan Payne  
Managing Director Toronto Home Shows

c.c.

Michael Thompson, Chair Economic & Community Development Committee  
Mark Grimes, Chair Board of Governors, Exhibition Place  
Chris Murray, City Manager  
Jeff Fielding, Chief of Staff, City Manager's Office  
Mike Williams, General Manager, Economic Development & Culture Office  
Don Boyle, CEO, Exhibition Place  
Laura Purdy, GM, Enercare Centre  
Home Show Exhibitors