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Ontario Korean Businessmen's Association

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Don Cha, Ontario Korean Businessman's Association (OKBA)

Holiday Shopping – Remarks

My name is Don Cha and I am the General Manager of the Ontario Korean Businessman's Association.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on the importance of Toronto's small businesses and convenience stores for our communities.

The OKBA was originally established in 1973 as a not-for-profit association for independent convenience store owners throughout the province of Ontario.

OKBA's typical member operates a store that is a family-run business. Our members work long days, often seven days a week, and keep their stores open for long hours, maintaining 18-hour days.

If The City of Toronto allows large chain corporations to break the rules and open on statutory holidays it will hurt our ability to compete and put Toronto's independent convenience stores at risk.

In many cases our store owners, most of whom are new Canadians, choose to invest their life savings to operate their own businesses and provide a better future for themselves and their families. Undoubtedly, you all have independent convenience stores operating in your neighbourhoods, and many of those stores are owned and operated by members of the Korean community.

Business for our members these days is difficult. High hydro bills and growing red tape continue to chip away at our already razor-thin margins. We will not be able to continue to survive in an environment that gives large businesses more opportunity to weaken our ability to compete.

If the City of Toronto allows big businesses to operate on even holidays, you will also be facilitating the closure and loss of independent convenience stores across Toronto.

I urge the City to consider the important role convenience stores play in your neighbourhoods and not allow big box business to overpower and undermine small businesses in Toronto.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

Don Cha