

Dear Mrs. Kang,

I, Davor Pandza, am writing you as person who is directly affected by the decisions of your ministry. For the past 10 years I have been employed (first as server, then as restaurant manager) by the Law Courts Inn - a public venue located in the Law Courts complex on Robson Square. This venue has been the home of the bench, the bar and the general public ever since the Robson Square Law Courts opened in 1982.

Most recently your ministry has decided not to renew our lease starting Sept 30, 2020, but instead to convert the space to non-judicial offices. I would kindly ask you to reconsider this decision due to the following reasons:

1. Not renewing our lease at this current moment in time, guarantees that I and my entire team of 12 full time employees and another 25 casual staff will become unemployed. With all hotels, restaurants and other hospitality venues working at minimum capacity we will be guaranteed to be unemployed for a long, long time. Canada's Government is trying to tether employees to their business - this decision does exactly the opposite - puts all of us in forced unemployment. Please note our venue is viable with strong cash position and solid book of business. Were it not for this decision - we would be still in business and earning a paycheck.
2. Our venue has been run as a non profit organization as community centre. We hosted many events at discounted or fully complimentary rates. Organizations for troubled youth, for sick children, for women who give birth in prison, for people who have no access to justice and many, many others (see attached) found a home and support for their cause in our venue at minimum cost. Closing our venue will feel like closing their local community centre as many have been with us for years.
3. Our venue is an Arthur Erickson designed architectural master piece. You may see pictures on the attached. We have hosted numerous weddings, university and high school graduations, celebrations of life and social events in our venue over the past 35+ years. Arthur Erickson designed the venue to be the heart of the Law Courts complex and specifically to be accessed and enjoyed by the public. Over the years this has brought tremendous amount of goodwill to the Law Courts, as our venue, in its current set-up and function is unique from any other law complex in the world. Destroying an architectural masterpiece with amazing 18ft floor to ceiling views, overlooking a 100 yard serenity pond and award winning landscape architecture designed by Cornelia Oberlander (Canada's pioneer in landscape architecture) and turning it into offices, will simply be a bad decision. I dare to say that the public will eventually want to know why this decision was made. Arthur Erickson is one of Vancouver's brightest stars (similar to Frank Lloyd Wright in the US) and tearing down his genius work to make offices will be an irreversible decision which will upset many people.
4. To redo this 5000 sq.ft architectural masterpiece into offices, the provincial government will have to spend over a million dollars. I wonder if this is in the budget currently? Is this the best use for taxpayer funds right now, in the middle of pandemic, given that many offices are currently empty and can be rented much cheaper that to renovate this architectural landmark. I also wonder if renovations will begin immediately or the venue will simply sit empty for a year or two while all of our employees collect unemployment - something which will be extremely counterproductive. Moreover, if the offices are ever completed, they are sure to be the most palatial of any government office in BC, given the views and awe inspiring architecture.

Mrs. Kang, I do not want to take away from the difficult job that you have and that hard work that you put in. I know you are juggling many conflicting goals, public uses and budgets. I actually admire you for serving all of us - the public. I am very grateful for everything you do in service of all of us. By writing this letter, I would ask that you re-evaluate your decision based on the above reasons. I would also invite you to see the venue for yourself - it is truly awe inspiring - turning it into offices will be a shame. We should be treasuring our architectural and civic legacy, not going the opposite way. Lastly, I attach 2 letters - from the Law Courts Inn Society and the Arthur Erickson Foundation which address the issue discussed above.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach me. I remain thankful for your services.

Davor Pandza
Restaurant Manger