



**Thunder Bay
Chamber
of Commerce**



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ECONOMIC RENEWAL AND BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS EMERGE AS ONTARIO BUSINESS PRIORITIES

Business leaders from across the province identified the key steps to achieving economic renewal and business competitiveness in Ontario at the 97th Annual General Meeting & Convention of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce held in Orangeville, Ontario.

Seventeen policy priorities were approved, including two from the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, bringing to 102 the total number of policies supported by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce network representing roughly 60,000 businesses in every community of the province.

“We were very pleased that the Ontario Chambers of Commerce supported the resolution to immediately increase the Ontario Innovation Tax Credit to 25% of first \$2 million in qualifying Scientific Research and Experimental Development expenditures”, stated Lisa Sticca, Chair of the Board, Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce. “We also received support for the resolution to work with Ottawa to ensure that Ontario employees can get the same Employment Insurance benefits and job training as workers in other regions of Canada.”

“This network has supported many of the resolutions presented by our Chamber”, stated Mary Long-Irwin, President, Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce. “This enables us to have a stronger voice at Queens Park”, added Long-Irwin

“A competitive tax and regulatory regime, modern energy and infrastructure foundations, and a skilled workforce are key to Ontario overcoming the current malaise affecting our economy and regaining its competitive edge in the world,” says Len Crispino, President & CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. “The status quo is not an option. We must continue to take bold steps to ensure that our province provides the best possible environment in order for businesses to invest and create jobs for all Ontarians.”

Some of the key priorities identified were:

- A commitment to reducing Ontario's regulatory burden on business that includes the following: annual benchmarks, sustainability targets, participation by all government agencies and ministries and all levels of personnel, a mandatory five year review of all regulations, and a statutory requirement for broad-based business review of any new regulation
- Modernized infrastructure with an efficient approval process which contains planning that is consistent, long-term and includes sustainable funding
- Skills development for new and current workforce participants that: encourages education and training partners to focus the proper resources on the skills and areas most needed in the transitioning economy; and an expansion of the Second Career strategy which expands the skills that qualify and allows more time to earn accreditation
- A nuclear strategy in Canada, developed by the provincial and federal governments in consultation with all stakeholders, that ensures jobs, investment and economic strength are retained in Ontario and Canada
- Fairness for Ontario workers in terms of Employment Insurance benefits and training

A single sales tax was also discussed by delegates at the convention, with a presentation on the topic by University of Toronto Professor, Michael Smart. Other leading economists including Finn Poschmann of the C.D. Howe Institute and Derek Burleton of TD Bank Financial Group also reinforced the importance of sales tax harmonization as one of the important steps to a more robust Ontario economy.

A full listing of the approved policy resolutions can be found at www.occ.on.ca.

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