



# connections

get plugged into your network

February 2019

## Our ask on Bill C-69 and getting our resources to international markets

Canada's economy has always been very resource-dependent. You know, that "hewers of wood, drawers of water" language that you learned about in grade 6 history class?

With this in mind and knowing that we all benefit from a strong resource economy, we want to work together with our chamber network to demonstrate widespread support from the business community to fix Bill C-69, make the regulatory changes promised in the *Fall Economic Update* and make plans to get our resources to tidewater as rapidly as possible.

Coming together means delivering a clear message to politicians across the country: Canada's business leaders (that includes you!) have had enough empty and divisive rhetoric and we want real, concrete actions.

To assist in delivering this urgent message, we will be doing our part via two key activities:

1. A National Day of Action in support of Canada's resources sector on February 20.
2. Providing testimony to the Senate on proposed amendments to Bill C-69.

But we need your help! Here's what we're asking you to do:

1. For the National Day of Action on February 20, use our [toolkit](#) containing a template news release, social media messaging and letters to reach out to your elected officials to generate awareness through your local news media and social platforms. To download the [toolkit](#), click [here](#).
2. Following our submission to the Senate outlining proposed amendments to Bill C-69, we expect to be asked for testimony in mid-February. If you believe the federal government must address our broken regulatory system and our inability to build the energy infrastructure to drive our economy, we urge you to [sign and send our letter back](#). We will bring all of your letters to our Senate Committee appearance and refer to them in our testimony. The letter can be found in the [toolkit](#) and you can return it to [policy@chamber.ca](mailto:policy@chamber.ca).

We look forward to joining you in sounding the alarm about our shared concerns, the policy resolutions that underpin them and the inability of our federal, provincial/territorial and local politicians to make meaningful changes to help our members and our communities.

## Tax report | 50 years of cutting and pasting

Earlier this week, we issued our long-awaited tax report authored by Trevin Stratton, our chief economist. The last time Canada undertook a comprehensive review of its tax system, humankind had yet to set foot on the moon.

In the five decades since, repeated cutting and pasting has left Canadian taxation uncompetitive, cumbersome and inefficient.

Over the past year, we heard from members of the business community from all sectors and regions of the country on their views of Canadian tax competitiveness and how to modernize Canada's system of taxation. We heard that Canada's outdated tax system has real costs—in terms of both money and time—for Canadian businesses.

Our consultations included interviews and roundtables with more than 80 business leaders and senior tax practitioners as well as tax policy resolutions from our network. The consensus of the Canadian business community is loud and clear: We need a comprehensive review, with everything on the table, to create a modern tax system that can help build a Canada that wins.

Prior to the report's release, we held a teleconference with chamber members to give "sneak peek" into the report's findings. That [call was recorded](#), and if you missed it, you may find it useful as you digest the report.

**FYI** - A toolkit for the report including media messaging - social and traditional will be released in time for tax season. This report and the tax issue will be a major part of our election platform.

## Take a look at what we did - together!

Our [annual report](#) is a great tool to share our network's successes on behalf of business. Please share widely with your members and future members.

## Pine beetle support

The threat from pine beetle infestation has hit a critical juncture. Warmer winters have bolstered the population, and the infestation will soon be in reach of the forests that border Alberta and Saskatchewan. If these forests become infested, there will be a clear path for the beetle to spread across the rest of Canada. Alberta is utilizing its stretched resources to hold back a national threat. Federal support to Alberta to manage the risk of national contagion is required immediately.

The Hinton Chamber of Commerce (AB) is encouraging the network to support a campaign that asks the government to put aside resources and share best practices in the fight to arrest the spread of the pine beetle across the country.

Could your chamber help? YES. By sending a [template letter](#) to three federal ministers — to raise awareness of the concern and impact and to encourage their support of what could be a devastating pest, sitting at the (wooden) doorstep of the rest of Canada. We have also sent a [letter](#) regarding this issue.

## Policy resolutions 2019

Now that we are well into 2019, many chambers are beginning the annual process of determining their policy priorities for this year. This being an election year, we will be publishing an election platform document and releasing a series of issue statements. The platform will be released in early March, and the issue statements will follow the release of the federal budget, which we expect will be tabled the week of March 18.

Once received, we encourage you to consider how these position statements might be incorporated into your own policy priorities when crafting your 2019 policy resolution proposals.

**FYI** - the submission deadline for policy resolution proposals is [June 3 at 24h00 EDT](#). We are in the process of making significant improvements to the online policy resolution submission form. This form will be live the second week of March. We will be providing additional information on this new tool and on the process when we send out our invitation to participate in the policy resolution process. You should expect that invitation by the first week of March. If you have any questions about our policy resolution process, contact [ssmith@chamber.ca](mailto:ssmith@chamber.ca) or [jmacdonald@chamber.ca](mailto:jmacdonald@chamber.ca).

**Upcoming:** Feb. 26 at 1PM ET, we will hold a teleconference to talk about the 2019 election platform. Please [register](#).

## Webinar: Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) recently announced a pilot program and we quickly put together a webinar for chambers with some IRCC staffers. If you were unable to join us on that call, we did record it and have other documents that you may wish to access.

- [Webinar recording](#)
- [PowerPoint Presentation - English](#)
- [Full details of the process](#)
- [List of communities' eligibility](#)

As mentioned in the webinar, applications are due by **March 1**.

Questions or comments?

Email [IRCC.ImmigrationRural-RuraleImmigration.IRCC@cic.gc.ca](mailto:IRCC.ImmigrationRural-RuraleImmigration.IRCC@cic.gc.ca) or contact Leah Nord, Director of Skills & Immigration Policy, [lnord@chamber.ca](mailto:lnord@chamber.ca), 1-800-661-2930 x2236.

## A different kind of policy internship: we're taking it to the next level!

In keeping with our goal of further strengthening the relationship between the chamber network and our team, we are upping our game in terms of chamber policy interns.

This initiative will create an opportunity for a member of the chamber network to join us this summer and have the opportunity to work closely with us as a policy advisor on a range of policy initiatives, including the policy resolution process, and the federal election platform.

While we have had great interns over the last two years, we feel this is an opportunity to take the learning and awareness that both sides gain to a new level.

We are looking for someone who is outgoing and energetic with a deep interest in policy issues. Someone who might like to grow their exposure to federal issues and has a desire to deepen their understanding of the role and operations of our organization.

Interested in finding out more? The guidelines, application process

and the timelines are in the [intern outline](#). Deadline is March 15.

## Help shape the tools for your network

Your feedback is being sought in a network survey. Topics include: what communication tools work for you? What social platforms does your chamber use/find valuable? If we were to work collaboratively on an awareness campaign (i.e. what a chamber is/does, etc.), would that be of value to you?

**Warning:** the survey will take you about 15 minutes to complete but your feedback is imperative to creating tools that will serve you/your chamber better in future. Please participate now: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2019CoCSurvey>. Survey will close [February 28](#).

## Did you know that half a million Canadians miss work each week due to a mental health related illness?

Workplace mental health is a universal concern, which is why we have partnered with the Mental Health Commission of Canada to launch [338 Conversations](#).

338 Conversations is a call to action for all 338 members of Parliament to join forces with local chambers of commerce to promote workplace mental health and encourage the business community to take the steps needed to ensure the mental well-being of their workers.

Chambers are well-positioned as the *voice of business* in your community to take the lead on healthy workplaces. We have created a toolkit for MPs and chambers of commerce to promote this initiative in your communities. To download the toolkit, click [here](#). To learn more about how you can promote mental health and prevent psychological harm in your workplace, click [here](#).

## Free subscription to Canadian SME Magazine is yours!

Canadian SME Magazine is offering chambers of commerce a free 1-year online subscription. Click [here](#) to read February's issue! Please share this offer with your membership as well!

## New chamber leaders across the country

Please help us welcome new chamber leaders across Canada.

**Katerina Anastasiadis**, executive director, Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce (ON), [katerina@abbotsfordchamber.com](mailto:katerina@abbotsfordchamber.com).

**Murtaza Gurmani**, executive director, Baffin Regional Chamber of Commerce (NU), [execdir@baffinchamber.ca](mailto:execdir@baffinchamber.ca).

**Darah Selanders**, president, Carstairs & Community Chamber of Commerce (AB), [carstairschamber@gmail.com](mailto:carstairschamber@gmail.com).

**Pam Doucet**, president, Chambre de commerce de Clare (NS), [contact@commercedeclare.ca](mailto:contact@commercedeclare.ca).

**Colleen Van Raalte**, executive director, Coaldale & District Chamber of Commerce (AB), [info@coaldalechamber.com](mailto:info@coaldalechamber.com).

**Heather Howard**, executive director, Conception Bay Area Chamber of Commerce (NL), [info@cbachamber.com](mailto:info@cbachamber.com).

**Diana Steer**, office manager, Didsbury & District Chamber of Commerce (AB), [info@didsburychamber.ca](mailto:info@didsburychamber.ca).

**Cheryl Montgomery**, executive director, Fort St. John & District Chamber of Commerce (BC), [info@fsjchamber.com](mailto:info@fsjchamber.com).

**Acacia Pangilinan**, interim executive director, Kamloops Chamber of Commerce (BC), [acacia@kamloopschamber.ca](mailto:acacia@kamloopschamber.ca).

**Melissa Ratcliff**, CEO, New Westminster Chamber of Commerce (BC), [ceo@newwestchamber.com](mailto:ceo@newwestchamber.com).

**Michelle Meatheringham**, administrative executive and community liaison, Rocky Mountain House & District Chamber of Commerce (AB), [michelle@rockychamber.org](mailto:michelle@rockychamber.org).

**Emy Brubacher**, interim general manager, Simcoe & District Chamber of Commerce (ON), [emy.brubacher@simcoechamber.on.ca](mailto:emy.brubacher@simcoechamber.on.ca).

**Nadine Lachance**, general manager, Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Vaudreuil-Dorion (QC), [nadinelachance@ccivs.ca](mailto:nadinelachance@ccivs.ca).

**Michelle Henderson**, general manager, Vegreville & District Chamber of Commerce (AB), [vegchamb@telus.net](mailto:vegchamb@telus.net).