

CANADIAN BUSINESS AGENDA



January 2007

A monthly update from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce on policy issues affecting Canada's business sector

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce is pleased to present to you the first issue of the *Canadian Business Agenda*.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, has been Canada's *Voice of Business*TM since 1925. Through our network of local chambers of commerce and boards of trade, at least one in every federal riding, we represent 170,000 businesses - a strong voice for business.

Our advocacy work is done in partnership with our member businesses across the country, and together we are working to make Canada an even *better* place to live, work and invest - for the benefit of all Canadians.

Once a month, the *Canadian Business Agenda* will cross your desk. We hope that it will keep you informed about our issues and concerns.

Please feel free to contact us, our coordinates are noted on this newsletter.

Bill C-257 - An Act to Amend the Canada Labour Code (replacement workers) - Call to Action

Bill C-257, "*An Act to Amend the Canada Labour Code (replacement workers)*", has passed the second reading vote in the House of Commons and is now currently being studied by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and Status of Persons with Disabilities.

It is the Canadian Chamber's opinion that any change to the Canada Labour Code, especially an amendment that alters the relationship between employers and employees, deserves extensive study in order to fully understand the

impacts on Canadian society and the economy. As stated in section 2.4 of *Bill C-257*, the bill would prevent uninterrupted provision of services that affect seniors, families, small businesses and the Canadian economy - services such as 911; health and emergency services; transportation services (air, rail, marine, and road) and news and weather warnings in the event of a storm or tragedy.

As such, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce launched a letter writing campaign with our members in early January, aimed at defeating *C-257* at the earliest opportunity.

We would strongly encourage all MPs to work to defeat this bill. Its effect could be detrimental to businesses and individuals alike.

Canadian Chamber of Commerce, and Ministers Emerson and Flaherty Make Visits to China

The Honourable David Emerson, the Minister of International Trade and the Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, travelled to Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai from January 14-19. Minister Emerson led two Canadian business delegations, one representing Canada's science and technology sector and one representing the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative (transportation and logistical services). While in Hong Kong, Minister Emerson met with Nancy Hughes Anthony, President & CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, at a regional meeting of the southeast Asian Canadian Chambers of Commerce. In Beijing, Minister Emerson signed two agreements. On January 15, Minister Emerson and the Chinese Minister for Science and Technology signed a *Science and Technology Co-operation Agreement*.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce is Canada's leading business organization speaking on behalf of a strong, diverse network of 170,000 members. Our membership of local chambers of commerce, boards of trade, associations and corporations, represents businesses of all sizes and sectors, in every federal riding across Canada.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce strongly endorses an expansion of the business relationship between Canada and China. The Chamber is encouraged by these ministerial trips to China and the more positive and constructive approach to relations with China by the government of Canada that these trips appear to signal.

Ms. Hughes Anthony's trip to China, which included stops in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing, follows closely on the heels of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's China strategy paper, developed in 2006. This paper, *China and Canada: the Way Ahead*, (which can be found on our Web site at <http://www.chamber.ca/cmslib/general/china-e3.pdf>) has been delivered to multiple stakeholders since its release.

Boosting Economic Ties and Cutting Barriers – Strategies for Closer Economic Relations: Canadian Chamber of Commerce India Forum

On February 5th, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce will hold its India Forum at the Toronto Board of Trade. India is now the 10th largest economy in the world; the fourth largest in terms of purchasing power parity and with recent growth rates in the 8 percent range, India has rapidly become an important economic player. This day-long forum will look at ways to tap into the opportunities that exist within this growing market.

There are opportunities for Canadian business to do much more with India. And there are opportunities for Indian business and investment in Canada but we do not seem to be on India's radar screen in a significant way. What is standing in the way of a greater two-way economic partnership?

Be part of the discussion as business leaders look to answer this question. The Canadian Chamber's business forum is one part of an India project that will include further research, expert consultations, and member discussions. The results of these initiatives will culminate in the publication of a major research paper that will guide the Canadian Chamber's advocacy work aimed at significantly increasing economic activity between our two countries.

For forum program information, go to the Chamber's Web site at <http://www.chamber.ca/article.asp?id=5145>; to register, visit the events section of the Toronto Board of Trade Web site at www.bot.com.

Canadian Chamber of Commerce Supports Ending the Canadian Wheat Board's Monopoly

On January 18, 2007, an op-ed supporting the Conservative government's bold and long overdue commitment to end the Canadian Wheat Board's monopoly, appeared in the *Financial*

Post. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce has long called for the end of the CWB's monopoly powers and supports giving western Canadian wheat and barley farmers a marketing choice. Many western Canadian farmers share the Canadian Chamber's opinion that the CWB's monopoly has outlived its usefulness. In addition, numerous independent economic analyses show that ending the monopoly could result in an economic boom for the value-added processing industry that would make western Canadian wheat and barley farmers better off than under the board's monopoly.

Canadian Chamber Again Calls for Canadian Government to Show More Flexibility in the Doha Round of Trade Talks

On January 30, 2007, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce sent a letter to Ministers Emerson, Strahl, Bernier and Flaherty, as well as all premiers and the appropriate provincial and territorial ministers, outlining the Canadian Chamber's continued support for the Doha Round of trade talks and urging the government of Canada, in conjunction with the provinces and territories, to show the political will and flexibility necessary to successfully conclude an agreement. Canada's continued stance that "our supply management system is not on the table" makes Canada an impediment to an ambitious outcome that will lift millions of people around the globe out of poverty. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Canadian Services Coalition in a separate letter, urged the government of Canada to do what is in Canada's best interests, as a trade-dependent economy, as consumers and as global citizens.

Dates to Watch

February 1 - Canadian Chamber of Commerce will appear before the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics regarding *PIPEDA*.

February 5 - Canadian Chamber India Forum, Toronto "Boosting Economic Ties and Cutting Barriers". Details at www.chamber.ca.

February 20 - Canadian Chamber hosts Bill Gates, Chairman Microsoft, Ottawa. Details, www.chamber.ca.

For more information on the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and our policy initiatives, consult our Web site at www.chamber.ca



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