

CANADIAN BUSINESS AGENDA



February 2008

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

Canadian Chamber of Commerce Urges Immediate Action from Government

In light of recent economic turbulence, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce urged all MPs returning for this session of parliament to consider that it is critical that members of all parties set aside petty differences and put economic concerns at the top of parliament's agenda.

With Canada's economy facing strong pressures, governments urgently need to act. They must lighten the burden of regulation, cut interprovincial trade barriers, better utilize immigrants through recognition of foreign credentials and improved labour market integration, keep the Canada-U.S. border open for legitimate travellers and business and ensure a competitive tax environment. These areas constitute major impediments to the potential growth, competitiveness and ongoing success of Canadian businesses. To further delay action would put at risk the jobs of Canadian workers and the prosperity of communities across our country.

Canadian Chamber Welcomes Canada's First Enhanced Drivers' Licence in British Columbia

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce welcomed a recent announcement that Canada's first enhanced drivers' licence (EDL) will be available through a pilot project in British Columbia. The EDL denotes the carriers' citizenship and is a Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) compliant document, facilitating cross-border travel between Canada and the United States.

Washington State recently launched an EDL program as well. Participating in this voluntary program costs an additional \$15 USD to the regular driver's licence fee. In addition to Washington State and B.C., a number of other Canadian provinces and U.S. states have expressed interest in EDLs and have begun developing their own enhanced drivers' licences.

The enhanced drivers' licence holds significant potential as a less expensive and more attractive form of documentation than a passport for the many Canadians whose international travel

interests include the United States only, and yet provide an advanced level of security. We look forward to the expansion of the B.C. program and would encourage all provincial and territorial governments to develop enhanced drivers' licences in preparation for the full implementation of the WHTI in June 2009.

Upcoming Report – Reducing Canada-U.S. Border Costs

In speaking with our members and other organizations, businesses have been growing more and more concerned with the 'thickening' of the Canada-U.S. border and there has been a sense of frustration that many practical measures that can reduce border related costs are not being taken. While there have been a number of excellent papers on the border, a sustained, broad-based and targeted Canada-U.S. action plan has been missing. A report to be issued within the next month by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce will fill this gap and will offer practical recommendations to reduce border related costs while strengthening security.

The Canadian Chamber, in consultation with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, our members and Canadian and U.S. associations who have a focus on the Canada-U.S. border, has authored this collaborative endeavour that, if acted upon, will reduce the costs and increase the predictability of the Canada-U.S. border.

These solutions would represent a big win for Canadian and American jobs, companies and a secure North America.

All MPs will receive a copy of the report upon its release.

CCC Speaks to Improving Canadian Competitiveness

In early January, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce made a submission to the Competition Policy Review Panel which is exploring Canada's investment and competition policies to improve Canada's international competitiveness.

The Canadian Chamber provided the review panel with many

recommendations including:

- ◆ encouraging a big, bold initiative, such as competitive tax rates and a focus on education as was undertaken in Ireland, to make Canada a more attractive and competitive country as a base of operations for companies
- ◆ removing internal barriers to trade
- ◆ a review of Canada's corporate and securities legislative framework to ensure Canadian companies are provided sufficient time and tools to determine what is in their shareholders' long-term interests
- ◆ allowance of interest deductibility on money borrowed to acquire shares of foreign affiliates
- ◆ the creation of a Canadian brand for promoting inward investment
- ◆ the need for the federal government to take decisive action now

The Chamber's submission is available on our Web site at www.chamber.ca/cmslib/general/080111Submission.pdf.

Canadian Chamber to Participate in Global Counterfeiting Conference

From February 3-5, 2008, the Canadian Chamber will be participating in the Fourth Annual Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy in Dubai, UAE. This year's global congress is being hosted by the World Customs Organization and Dubai Customs. Along with the WCO, the congress is convened by Interpol, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) through its BASCAP initiative, the International Trademark Association (INTA) and the International Security Management Association (ISMA).

The Canadian Chamber has been very active in the fight against counterfeiting and piracy and is continuing to press the Canadian government for much needed changes to Canada's intellectual property regime. As an example, additional resources are required at Canada's border points to more effectively identify and seize suspected shipments of counterfeit goods.

The global congress is aimed at promoting best practices and the sharing of information among and between enforcement agencies, the judiciary, policy makers and the private sector. The congress is also expected to identify concrete solutions to the global problems generated by the growth in counterfeiting and piracy and to further raise awareness of the serious impact this illegal trade has on the health and safety of consumers.

Canadian Chamber Submits Comments on PIPEDA

In January the Canadian Chamber submitted comments on

the government's consultation regarding the statutory review of the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA). While the government has responded that a privacy breach notification should be legislated, the Canadian Chamber would prefer that the voluntary privacy breach guidelines that were developed in conjunction with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner be given adequate time to work.

The Chamber's submission is available at <http://www.chamber.ca/cmslib/general/080115SubmissionPIPE DA200811685831.pdf>.

Canadian Chamber Expresses its Support of Bill C-23, an Act to Amend the Canada Marine Act

In a recent submission, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce expressed its support for Bill C-23, *An Act to Amend the Canada Marine Act* (CMA), the *Canada Transportation Act*, the *Pilotage Act* and other acts in consequence. Bill C-23 is currently being reviewed by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

The proposed amendments to the *Canada Marine Act* announced by the government of Canada will facilitate increased flexibility and marketplace responsiveness. Bill C-23 removes restrictions on receiving federal contribution funding and enables Canadian Port Authorities (CPAs) to engage in more flexible and in some cases, commercially-based, borrowing regimes. These amendments will facilitate investment by Canadian ports in new facilities, enabling CPAs to efficiently respond to changes in the marketplace.

Additionally, through these changes, the competitive position of Canadian ports will be enhanced, facilitating increased trade and ensuring that they compete on an even footing with U.S. ports.

Marine transportation is a critical component of our national multi-modal transportation system. Ensuring a competitive and sustainable marine transportation sector will guarantee that our shippers and manufacturers have the ability to continue to expand their services to national and international markets in a cost effective manner.

For more info on the Canadian Chamber of Commerce & our policy initiatives, consult www.chamber.ca or contact Chris Gray, cgray@chamber.ca, (613) 238-4000, x251

The Canadian Chamber has been Canada's Voice of Business™ since 1925. Through our network of local chambers of commerce and boards of trade, we represent over 170,000 businesses. The [Canadian Business Agenda](#) is designed to keep you informed of business issues that affect communities across this country.