

January 23, 2009

The Honourable Jim Prentice, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Environment
Environment Canada
10 Wellington Street, 28th Floor
Gatineau, QC K1A 0H3

Dear Minister:

In October 2008, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce held its 79th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Québec City. One of the highlights of Canadian Chamber's AGM is the Policy Session. It is during the Policy Session that resolutions submitted by local chambers of commerce and boards of trade from across the country are debated and voted on by accredited delegates. Once approved, these resolutions become policy of the Canadian Chamber for three years. This year, delegates issued a clear national policy mandate that we will pursue vigorously with the federal government over the coming months.

Our renewed national policy mandate includes a number of issues that fall within your portfolio. We would like to discuss these issues with you directly in the near future. I have outlined these policy positions below.

Agriculture can help Canada meet its Greenhouse Gas Targets: Agriculture is a sector that can be an important part of Canada's efforts to reduce its net greenhouse gas emissions, particularly through the generation of offset credits. This resolution outlines some ways that the process for generation of agriculture offsets can be expedited.

International Climate Change Framework: The Canadian Chamber supports the development of an international framework to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions on a long-term basis that includes all major GHG-emitting countries. This resolution outlines some of the key elements that such a framework should include.

Harmonizing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Regulations in Canada: The rapidly evolving climate change targets being developed separately by Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments pose a serious challenge to business certainty and compliance. To be effective and efficient, the federal government, in concert with Canada's provinces and territories, should develop a coordinated and consistent approach to climate change and air pollution.

Definition of the Precautionary Principle: The federal government has long supported the "Rio" definition of the precautionary principle, which reads: "Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation." This is the definition that should be used in all legislation,

regulations and treaties. The federal government must avoid made-in-Canada variations (as was done, for example, in the Marine Conservation Areas Act).

Unique Economic Advantages in Canada through the Conservation of our Water Resources: One way Canada's business communities can lead the way in conserving our resources is through using water more efficiently. Water efficiency will also trigger new economic activities for water-related manufacturing and service sectors, encouraging new business opportunities and job creation. The federal government can help to encourage this through incentives, auditing programs and the promotion of continual improvement in water conservancy.


Growing the Availability of Alternative Fuels in Canada: A major reason that the use of alternative transportation fuels, such as natural gas, hydrogen, ethanol, propane and biodiesel, has been slow to increase in Canadian marketplace is that they require a refueling infrastructure in order for Canadians to have easy access. The federal government can help to facilitate the introduction of alternative fuels through exemptions from fuel taxes, incentives through tax credits for the installation of fuel infrastructure, and support for the development and sale of alternative fuel vehicles.

Expedited Application and Funding Approval Process for Bioproduct Applications: The process of investment attraction is extremely competitive and the availability of financial incentives can be a critical factor that determines where an investment will be made. To assist in Canada becoming more competitive internationally as an investment location for bio-industrial projects, the federal government should expedite the evaluation and approval processes for projects seeking financial assistance through the various available federal funding mechanisms.

Federal Alignment of Liens Policies with Provincial Counterparts: The misalignment of federal and provincial/territorial policies around liens on derelict properties creates hardships for municipalities and serve as a significant deterrent for individuals or businesses that wish to purchase land for the purpose of redevelopment. The federal government should work to align their liens policies with the provinces/territories so that there is a consistent and coordinated national approach to the removal of Crown liens and tax arrears on qualified properties.

The full text of these resolutions is attached and I hope that we will have an opportunity to discuss these with you in the near future. We will contact your office shortly to set up a meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Perrin Beatty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and a long, sweeping underline.

Perrin Beatty
President and CEO

Attachments