

November 13, 2009

The Honourable Jason Kenney, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and Multiculturalism  
365 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1L1

Dear Minister:

In October, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce concluded its 80<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Victoria. One of the highlights of 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 the policy position of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce for three years. This year, our delegates issued a clear and decisive national policy mandate that we intend to pursue vigorously with the federal government over the coming months.

Beyond those issues we have already brought to your attention, our renewed national policy mandate includes a number of additional issues that fall within your portfolio.

**Increase the Attraction and Retention of Immigrants to Mid-Sized and Smaller Urban Centres:**

Small Canadian communities are confronted with a pending economic crisis; populations are aging, birthrates are in decline, young workers are increasingly mobile and community sustainability relies on the productivity of a depleting workforce. The Canadian Chamber recommends that the federal government address the unique needs of smaller urban centres, those between 10,000 and 100,000 persons, through its immigration and settlement integration policies. It is essential that it work aggressively with smaller urban centres to: encourage immigration that meets the business and economic needs of the community; that it collaborate with provinces and smaller urban centers to develop innovative integration strategies that equitably benefit all regions; and that it reduce the minimum investment required by the investor-class applicant under the Provincial Nominee Programs.

**National Urban Agenda Needed:**

Canada's largest urban areas are not only hubs of people; their health is crucial to Canada's long-term economic success. However, Canada's lack of a concerted urban strategy is hampering the ability of Canada's cities to act as strong engines of growth and fulfill their role as necessary drivers for Canada's economic recovery. Ninety-seven percent of Canada's immigrants settle in urban centres, with 69% of all immigrants to Canada settling in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Immigrants to Canada and specifically immigrants to Canada's largest urban areas face greater socio-economic challenges than non-immigrants. The Canadian Chamber recommends that the federal government work in concert with the provinces and territories to establish a National Urban Agenda including urban immigration and education programs that are designed to meet the needs of Canada's growing immigrant population and ensure that Canada's immigration policy is coordinated in conjunction with municipal services.

Should you wish to discuss these issues further, I would be pleased to do so.

Sincerely,

Perrin Beatty  
President and Chief Executive Officer

Attachments

CC: Neil Yeates, Deputy Minister, Citizenship and Immigration  
Canada