



Canadian  
Chamber of  
Commerce

Chambre de  
Commerce  
du Canada

The Future of Business Success  
L'avenir de la réussite en affaires

# Canadian Chamber of Commerce National Policy Resolution Process

## Drafting Toolkit

APRIL 2026

## Introduction

Drafting a policy resolution is a complex process. In the process of drafting legislation, the Government of Canada engages in multiple rounds of consultations and relies on the expertise of numerous policy analysts and lawyers. The process often takes years.

You may be a single person drafting your resolution in the span of a few weeks or months. Yet, your resolution is going to be held to a high standard by the Chamber Network Review Committee and placed under scrutiny by your peers at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's Annual General Meeting.

So, how are you going to produce a high-quality resolution in this limited time?

This Drafting Toolkit is here to help you be successful by breaking down each of the five screening criteria into key principles and drafting techniques that lead to a strong submission. They reflect observations on mistakes made historically and provide clear guidance on how those pitfalls can be avoided.

The 2026 Submission Guidelines will always be the North Star of how your resolution is evaluated.

The more you strive to meet the standards contained in this toolkit, the greater the chances are of your resolution passing to the next stage. In cases of ambiguity regarding interpretation of any criteria, you can look to this toolkit for clues as to how those ambiguities may be resolved by the Committee.

## 1. Within Federal Jurisdiction

**Reminder of what this means:** Your resolution must **(A)** address an issue that the federal government has authority to act on and **(B)** identify a specific government entity (or, if applicable, multiple entities) that would implement your recommendation(s).

### Key Principles

Think like a lawyer for the Government of Canada (GoC) reviewing constitutional authority.

Your resolution should identify **what specific federal tool or authority** would address the problem, even if provinces are involved in addressing the broader issue.

For **purely federal matters** (e.g., tax, immigration, fisheries, etc.), the path for establishing jurisdiction and making authoritative recommendations is clear.

For matters with **shared jurisdiction** (e.g., agriculture, skills training, natural resources, interprovincial trade, etc.), *focus your recommendations on federal policy levers*. These include providing federal funding conditional on outcomes, using trade powers to remove barriers, establishing national standards, or creating programs that provinces can opt into.

Try to **avoid** asking the federal government to simply "work with provinces" or "encourage provincial action" without identifying the federal authority or mechanism being used. The Drafting Technique below can help you with this.

### Drafting Technique: Clear Federal Authority

When an issue falls across multiple jurisdictions, how can you identify actions that are strictly within the ambit of the GoC?

In general, try to avoid starting a resolution with the words in the lefthand column of Table 1 (on the following page), and look instead to concrete actions that the GoC can take. These "cop out" words often weaken a resolution by removing the onus to act and do not create a clear standard of accountability.

**Table 1. Framing Federal Authority**

<b>INSTEAD OF...</b>	<b>TRY TO...</b>
<b>“Work with”</b>	<p>Describe the actions that the Government would take in a collaboration. What does the GoC bring to the table that other jurisdictions might lack? Is it funding? Larger network? Existing programs or infrastructure?</p> <p>Focus on the part of the collaboration that <b>only</b> the GoC can accomplish and why the other jurisdictions cannot accomplish the same goal without federal jurisdiction.</p>
<b>“Encourage”, “Support”, “Promote”</b>	<p>State <i>how</i> the Government would encourage provincial/territorial or local governments to act on the issue. Is it by increasing funding? Launching an educational campaign?</p> <p>That these actions would support the ultimate goal is implied. Your recommendation needs to be more specific in terms of <i>what</i> is being done and by what means.</p>
<b>“Consult with”, “Engage with”</b>	<p>Describe what the ideal outcome of the consultations would be. Is it to add or remove certain language in a piece of legislation? Is it to change how an existing program operates?</p> <p>If the resolution deals with a legislation or program that doesn't exist yet, be specific about what role a consultation plays in the process. For example: “Before tabling legislation on X, conduct a public consultation to gather feedback on [Government white paper / prior report / etc.] to address concerns related to Y.”</p> <p>If you cannot confidently answer the questions above, this is a sign that more research is needed to frame the issue. If the required information does not exist, it would be better for a third party to pursue a study or industry consultation before attempting to address the issue.</p> <p>It's fine if your recommendation(s) won't please everyone under the sun. Ultimately, a recommendation advances one particular position, which the Government will weigh against hundreds of others.</p>
<b>“Educate”</b>	<p>Consider what behaviour you are ultimately trying to change and what federal mechanism would drive that change. Awareness campaigns rarely move the needle on their own.</p> <p>Actionable policy levers include financial incentives or penalties, regulatory requirements for federally regulated industries, certification or licensing conditions, or funding conditional on compliance.</p>

## 2. In the National Interest

**Reminder of what this means:** Your resolution (**A**) focuses on an issue that affects businesses nationwide (or affects a nationally connected sector like agriculture or transportation) and your recommendations, if implemented, would improve competitiveness, facilitate trade, or improve operations for businesses across Canada (or all businesses in your sector). Implementing your recommendations (**B**) would not require taking away opportunities from businesses in other locations or sectors.

### Key Principles

Imagine that you are a policy analyst preparing a briefing for a Minister who has to defend a new program during Question Period in Parliament.

If pressed on why these recommendations are the best option, could your Minister defend them? A good resolution will take a sober approach to recommendations, ensuring that they are proportional and appropriate to address the issue at hand.

The recommendation(s) should address a barrier that **affects businesses across Canada** (within your sector). They should not help only one region, or size or type of business at another's expense. Ask yourself: would the recommendation(s) create shared opportunities, or would some businesses in your sector, or other regions or sectors, see it as favoring their competitors?

It is difficult to get anything done when an issue divides the government along regional lines. The strongest resolutions will lift the entire business ecosystem, not just one part of it. Of course, in the case of an inevitable conflict over regional neutrality, a good resolution will provide a strong rationale for why acting to benefit one sector or region would still serve the broader national interest.

### Drafting Technique: Connect the Dots

Say you have a resolution that is somewhat niche to your region, but that you feel is highly important. How can you make the case for it being in the national interest?

First, consider these initial questions:

- Are you sure that the issue is limited to your region? Have you spoken with other chambers to find out if they face a similar issue, or if a different issue impacts them in a similar way? Making a connection to at least one other region of Canada could be sufficient to satisfy the national interest requirement. (This must be a **broad** region, e.g. Atlantic Canada or the Prairies, and not just a single town/city in a different province.)
- Conversely, are there regions that are comparable to yours in terms of geography/population/etc. but that don't face this issue? Discuss why this is and how

your region could become a case study for the success of the type of intervention you're proposing, and how this intervention could be broadened to other scenarios.

- Has the issue always been limited to your region? Was this a nation-wide issue at some point, and did targeted intervention in those areas ameliorate the issue? Alternatively, was this issue created by a historical nation-wide policy decision that had an unforeseen negative impact on your region? In either case, discuss why your region was left behind and why federal action now would be a form of reparation.

If, after answering all these questions, your issue is still hyper-specific to your region, try the techniques in Table 2 to make your resolution more compelling from a national perspective.

### **Table 2. Making an Issue of National Interest**

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If the specificity is due to the unique landscape, climate, and/or population of your region...	Comment on how acting on the issue is a preventative measure, as environmental or population forces transform other regions of Canada to be more similar to yours. If possible, consider how intervention in your region could provide useful insights for addressing analogous issues in other regions.
If the specificity is due to an industry that is primarily clustered in your region...	Provide evidence for what percent of Canada's GDP that sector contributes to and/or how many people that sector employs. Discuss the importance of that industry to supporting other industries or the economy in general, and whether it is a growing industry (whether due to necessity or because it's strategic for Canada's economy to grow in this direction).
If the specificity is due to a specific interest that you represent...	Comment on how supporting this interest reflects Canadian values of multiculturalism, inclusivity, and/or Indigenous reconciliation.

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### 3. Timely and Actionable

**Reminder of what this means:** Your resolution must identify an issue that **(A)** is currently adversely affecting businesses, or one has the imminent potential of doing so. Your recommendations **(B)** are specific, concrete, and directly address the issue as defined; and **(C)** can be acted upon in the near-term (i.e., one parliamentary cycle).

#### Key Principles

Think like a policy analyst briefing their director. If you handed them your resolution, could they **immediately identify concrete first steps to take this year**? Your recommendation should create authority, establish systems, build evidence, or set precedents that get the ball rolling, not just restate a hard problem everyone already knows exists.

**For near-term issues**, ask yourself, could the GoC implement my recommendation(s) and demonstrate measurable progress within one parliamentary cycle? **For long-term challenges**, your resolution should focus on concrete first steps that can begin immediately. Frame your title, evidence, and recommendations around these foundational actions that build momentum toward the ultimate goal. See Drafting Technique 2 on page 7 for tips on how to achieve this

In general, for every recommendation, ask yourself: (1) If someone were to follow this instruction to the letter, would it be clear what their next step is? (2) How would I know that the GoC has implemented my recommendation successfully?

**IMPORTANT:** *Sunsetting resolutions* must either demonstrate continued relevancy and actionability under this criterion or be adapted to better reflect the current landscape. Resolution sponsors must not simply resubmit a resolution unchanged. They must either make the case for why it remains fully valid or update it accordingly.

**NOTE:** We encourage you to keep your recommendations to a **maximum of five while respecting the total word count of 300 words** for the Recommendations section. Recommendations such be drafted as a **single sentence, without sub-sections, lists, or additional elements**. Begin each recommendation with an **action verb**.

#### Drafting Technique 1: Action Verbs

The easiest way to test whether your recommendation is actionable is to see what verb it starts with. We often “put the cart before the horse” by using verbs that describe our desired outcome rather than an action that can be taken.

**Table 3** (on the next page) provides examples of common verbs used in resolutions which weaken recommendations. It is not an exhaustive list, and none of these words are “forbidden”, but if your recommendation starts with one of these words, that is an indicator that the recommendation is too vague and lacking concreteness. **Table 4** (which follows on page 9) provides suggested alternatives that make your recommendations more actionable.

**Table 3. Non-Actionable Verbs**

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“Ensure”	The GoC, despite all its best intentions, can never guarantee a specific outcome. Focus on how your recommendations bring the desired outcome closer to reality.
“Align”	This begs the question of what is out of alignment with what and why; your background should have made this clear, so jump straight into the recommended action.
“Require”	This begs the question of what would need to happen for the requirement to have authority.
“Commit”, “Prioritize”, “Recognize”	These weaken a recommendation by removing onus on the GoC to act in a way that produces concrete results.
“Simplify”, “Enhance”	These beg the question of why the existing method is not ideal; the Background of your resolution should have made this clear, so jump straight into the recommended action.
“Support X”	That your recommendation provides support is implied. Skip straight to stating what concrete action would be supportive.
“Explore”, “Consider”, “Pursue”	These beg the question of <i>how</i> the GoC would accomplish a recommendation.
“Strengthen”, “Accelerate”, “Enable”	These are not actions but outcomes; your resolution should state how the GoC would achieve these outcomes, which renders such words unnecessary.
“Educate”	This implies awareness is sufficient to drive change, which is rarely the case. What behaviour are you ultimately trying to change, and what federal mechanism would actually drive it?

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**Table 4. Actionable Verbs**

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When you want the GoC to do something new...	“Implement”, “Introduce”, “Enact”, “Legislate”, “Create”, “Launch”, “Adopt”, “Fund”, “Renew”, “Invest”
When you want the GoC to change something...	“Align”, “Amend”, “Revise”, “Update”, “Increase”, “Expand”, “Include”, “Extend”, “Broaden”
When you want the GoC to get rid of something...	“Reduce”, “Rescind”, “Repeal”
When you want the GoC to consider something in more depth before acting...	“Review”, “Collect”, “Conduct”
When you want the GoC to ask someone else to do something...	“Direct”, “Authorize”, “Designate”, “Place”, “Provide”, “Allocate”, “Mandate”

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## Drafting Technique 2: Concrete, Near-Term Actions

If your issue requires long-term actions to fully resolve, identify concrete first steps that can *start within one parliamentary cycle (approximately 4 years)* and build momentum toward the long-term goal. Below are examples of actionable near-term recommendations.

- **Regulatory/Legislative Foundation:** Establish regulatory frameworks, amend legislation, create legal authority, set minimum standards, or introduce phase-in timelines for future requirements.
- **Strategic Planning:** Develop national strategies with interim targets, launch multi-stakeholder processes with decision points, or commission studies that trigger action.
- **Pilot Programs & Demonstration Projects:** Launch pilot programs with clear evaluation criteria, create demonstration projects to test approaches, or establish proof-of-concept initiatives.
- **Funding Allocation:** Allocate dedicated funding, establish new funds or incentive programs, build enabling infrastructure, or create investment tax credits.
- **Data & Measurement:** Establish baseline metrics and data collection systems, set interim targets with accountability mechanisms, or create reporting requirements.
- **Institutional Changes:** Create new bodies or advisory committees, designate authority to existing departments, or assign clear accountability structures.
- **Federal Procurement & Leverage:** Use federal purchasing power to drive market change, set government commitments, or establish supplier standards.
- **Capacity Building:** Launch training programs, fund research and development, create knowledge mobilization initiatives, or establish centres of excellence.

## 4. Fundable

**Reminder of what this means:** Your resolution must **(A)** identify a realistic funding mechanism that demonstrates alignment with an existing government funding stream or priority, or in the absence of alignment, **(B)** provide a rationale for why the government should allocate funds to address the issue (academic research, industry reports, think tanks, or other credible sources).

### Key Principles

Think like the Parliamentary Budgeting Officer. No department has unlimited resources. What recommendations will generate “the biggest bang for their buck”? Is there an existing program that’s underleveraged whose scope can be expanded? Is the solution as simple as changing the definition in existing legislation?

Keep in mind the realities of how your recommendations would be implemented. Who would be in charge of doing it? Where would their resources come from?

This is **not** a costing exercise. You are **not** required to calculate how much your recommendations would cost and where the revenue would come from. You **are** required to show that the recommendations are **fundable**, meaning that the government has demonstrated an interest in acting upon your resolution.

Where a recommendation is not aligned with current GoC priorities, a rationale for why the government should fund the issue must be provided. We encourage you to draw from academic research, industry reports, think tanks, or other credible sources.

The Drafting Technique below provides guidance on how to find government “signals” of fundability.

### Drafting Technique: Government Signals

Rely on the following resources to demonstrate that the GoC has signaled interest in your policy area.

#### Mandate Letter

- **What it is:** Written instructions from the Prime Minister to each Minister outlining their priorities. These are public documents that show what the government is focused on.
- **Where to find it:** Search "ministerial mandate letters" on [Canada.ca](http://Canada.ca) or visit [pm.gc.ca/mandate-letters](http://pm.gc.ca/mandate-letters).

## Speech from the Throne

- **What it is:** A speech delivered at the opening of a new session of Parliament outlining the government's priorities and legislative agenda.
- **Where to find it:** Search "Speech from the Throne" on Canada.ca

## Federal Budget

- **What it is:** The GoC's annual financial plan showing spending priorities and new programs, usually released in March or April.
- **Where to find it:** Visit [budget.canada.ca](http://budget.canada.ca) or search "federal budget [year]" on Canada.ca

## Departmental Plan

- **What it is:** Annual reports showing each department's priorities, planned initiatives, and spending for the coming year.
- **Where to find it:** Visit the specific department's website (e.g., [tc.canada.ca](http://tc.canada.ca) for Transport Canada) and look for "Departmental Plan" or "Corporate reporting"

## Public Consultation

- **What it is:** When the government seeks public input on policy changes, it signals active interest in that area.
- **Where to find it:** Visit [canada.ca/consultations](http://canada.ca/consultations) or check department websites for "Have your say" sections.

## Existing Federal Program

- If a program already exists in your policy area, the government has demonstrated ongoing commitment.
- **Where to find it:** Search "[your topic] program" on Canada.ca or visit specific department websites. You can also search the open-source database Build Canada (<https://www.buildcanada.com/tracker/commitments>).

## Bill or Legislative Summary

- **What it is:** Bills before Parliament or recent legislation show areas of active government focus.
- **Where to find it:** Visit [parl.ca](http://parl.ca) and search "Bills" or check the Library of Parliament's legislative summaries.

**TIP:** Even if the government hasn't funded YOUR specific solution, showing they've invested in the broader policy area (e.g., "digital economy," "skills training," "supply chains") demonstrates fundability.

## 5. Credible

**Reminder of what this means:** Your resolution (**A**) relies on timely data from credible sources to make sound arguments, and sources are properly cited in the footnotes. Your resolution (**B**) does not contain AI hallucinations, and any that do will be rejected.

### Key Principles

Think like a policy advisor drafting a briefing note for a Minister. Would the sources you've cited **strengthen your case** or raise credibility questions? Could the Minister understand the argument you've presented without being given any additional information?

The goal is to strike a balance between (1) making the issue intelligible to someone who has no prior knowledge of it and (2) including enough detail that, if questioned, your reader could defend your position based on having read the resolution alone.

While drafting your resolution, try playing "devil's advocate" with yourself. What are the reasons that somebody could disagree with the framing of your issue or the necessity of your recommendations? What are the reasons that person would be wrong?

**See the Drafting Technique below for advice on how to find credible sources and how to properly cite those sources.**

Overall, your evidence and argumentation should make it **easier** to champion your resolution, not harder. Choose evidence that would help a government official say "yes" to your recommendations with confidence. To be clear, this does not mean that every source cited must explicitly prove your issue exists. It is expected that you will need to string together sources from multiple sources to make your argument, and doing so is encouraged.

Before submission, it is highly recommended that you ask a second or third (or fourth, etc.) party to read over your resolution and confirm that there are no missing pieces of information or leaps of logic required to understand your position.

### Drafting Technique: Credible Evidence

Credible sources are typically primary sources, meaning that the publisher of the information is the individual who collected the data, conducted the interviews, or performed the analyses presented in the source. Further, credible sources will explain their methodologies and their own data sources (if the source is conducting an analysis). **Always cite primary sources** where possible.

If you are reading a source and realize that it cites a piece of information you want to rely on, track down that original source and cite it. Citing secondary sources is acceptable where the primary source is inaccessible due to a paywall or other access restriction.

✓ **Examples of credible primary sources:**

- **Government publications:** Statistics Canada data (statcan.gc.ca), departmental reports, parliamentary budget officer reports, G7/G20 statements, etc.
- **Academic research:** Peer-reviewed studies, university research centres (e.g., Munk School of Global Affairs; Institute for Science, Society and Policy), etc.
- **Industry organizations:** Business Data Lab (BDL), Business Development Bank (BDC), sector associations (e.g., U15, Mining Association of Canada, TECHNATION, etc.), trade organizations, etc.
- **Your own data (with methodology explained):** Member surveys, consultations, economic impact studies, etc.
- **International organizations:** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Forum (WEF), World Trade Organization (WTO), International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), etc.
- **Reputable Canadian think tanks:** Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP), Conference Board of Canada, C.D. Howe Institute, Fraser Institute, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Brookfield Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, Public Policy Forum, Angus Reid Institute, etc.

[Click here for a list of Canadian think tanks.](#)

*(Note: Identify potential bias in analysis by think tanks with clear political leanings or financial interests.)*

- **Public opinion pollsters:** Abacus Data, Ipsos, EKOS, Pollara, Nanos, etc.
- **Established news outlets with first-person reporting:** e.g., CBC, Globe and Mail, National Post, Financial Post, Bloomberg, Reuters, etc.

✓ **Can be used as supporting context (but not as primary evidence):**

- Opinion pieces, editorials, and commentary from established journalists or experts (useful to show different perspectives, but cite the underlying data they reference)
- Analysis from advocacy organizations or policy institutes (acknowledge their perspective and use alongside neutral sources)
- Blog posts from law firms
- Member submissions to the GoC, which are publicly accessible

**⚠ Not acceptable as primary evidence or supporting context:**

- Social media posts, personal blogs, or unverified online content
- Anecdotal stories without data or broader evidence
- AI-generated content that has not been fact-checked by a human against credible sources
- Wikipedia (useful as a starting point, but always cite the original sources it references)

**Good luck with your submission!**

If you have any questions, please reach out to [policyresolution@chamber.ca](mailto:policyresolution@chamber.ca).