



**POLICY
REPORT
CARD
2016/2017**

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LETTER TO THE CHAMBER NETWORK

The last year has seen a period of rejuvenation and accomplishment for the policy work of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC). Not only have we begun a new chapter in our advocacy with the launch of a revitalized annual policy platform in the Ontario Economic Report, but we also achieved a record number of policy wins on behalf of our 60,000 members in 135 communities across the province.

Building upon the credibility we have established for leading policy and analysis, our work has become more concentrated on government relations – and that is why we have seen such success in translating advocacy into action. Together with our network and corporate members, we are putting out more focused work, in a timelier way, leveraging surveys and other tools in a way we have not in the past. Collectively, the OCC has become more driven by our ability to shape the provincial conversation.

We are also more intent on enabling and responding to the resolution process at our Annual General Meeting. This year, our federal and provincial pre-budget documents were almost wholly comprised of policy based on resolutions. Throughout all our reports, we are explicitly pointing back to resolutions that come from the Chamber Network. It is not lost on us that all our political capital begins with the strength of the Network, and we believe that it is our job to help strengthen that voice.

Across all media platforms and online, our collective voice has never been stronger. The goal for us has been to build upon the credibility of our policy work to achieve real and meaningful victories on behalf of Ontario's employer community. This strategy has enabled us to have some incredible wins over the last twelve months:

- ✓ Broad expansion of the Industrial Conservation Initiative so that medium-sized firms, manufacturers and companies can save up to a third off their electricity bill.
- ✓ Increase in economic-class immigrants so that Ontario employers have better access to important talent.
- ✓ Expansion of high-speed broadband infrastructure into south-western Ontario.

The relevancy of our work to local chambers of commerce and boards of trade is paramount to our success. In the next year, we hope to expand our engagement, seeking insight and inspiration from our network and working collaboratively to expand our voice and our reach.

We know the coming year will only be successful when all of us work together to lead Ontario.

Thank you for your on-going support.

The OCC Policy Team



ADVOCACY WINS

The OCC's powerful advocacy, backed by the strength of its Chamber Network and corporate partners, achieves impactful policy wins for Ontario businesses.



○ ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT: *SMALL BUSINESS TOO BIG TO IGNORE CAMPAIGN*

Ask: Earlier this year, the OCC, in partnership with local chambers of commerce and boards of trade, launched the *Small Business Too Big to Ignore* campaign to champion this vital component of Ontario's economy. In addition to highlighting the success of small businesses in Ontario, our objective was to identify and develop potential policy solutions to the most significant barriers to small business growth.

- ✓ **Win:** On March 1, the Ontario government launched its *Small Business Innovation Challenge*. Through this initiative, the Province is inviting small- and medium-sized businesses to develop, test and demonstrate innovative solutions to challenges that will enhance government programs and services.
- ✓ **Win:** During Question Period on October 19, the advocacy efforts of the *Small Business Too Big to Ignore* campaign were explicitly acknowledged by Minister of Economic Development and Growth, Brad Duguid. He emphasized how it highlighted concerns of rising input costs and electricity prices amongst the small business community.

"Mr. Speaker, we're working very closely with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. They've written a report that completely aligns very much with the work we're doing..."

— Hon. Brad Duguid, October 19, 2016.

○ ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT: *ELECTRICITY PRICING*

Ask: In our 2015 report, *Empowering Ontario: Constraining Costs and Staying Competitive in the Electricity Market*, the OCC called on the Ontario government to ensure that future energy policies reflect the principles of affordability, transparency and flexibility. This call was echoed in our December 2016 submission in advance of the Long-Term Energy Plan. In both documents the OCC argued that a thoughtful balancing of these three principles would promote economic prosperity and business competitiveness, and strengthen ratepayer confidence in Ontario.

- ✓ **Win:** In the September 2016 Throne Speech, the government announced that the Industrial Conservation Initiative will be expanded so that any company that consumes more than 1MW will be eligible. Accordingly, an additional 1000 companies in Ontario are now eligible to save between 14% to 30% on their bill, a noticeable increase from the 300 companies currently enrolled in the program.
- ✓ **Win:** The removal of the Debt Retirement Charge on commercial, industrial, and other non-residential electricity users on April 1, 2018, nine months earlier than expected.
- ✓ **Win:** In March 2017, the Ontario government announced its Fair Hydro Plan which will provide a 17% rate reduction and rate freeze to approximately 500,000 small businesses and farms. The government also announced a further expansion of the Industrial Conservation Initiative would be available to electricity consumers with peak demands between 500 kilowatts (KW) and 1 megawatts (MW) that operate under the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes 31, 32 and 33.



“...The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has highlighted the importance of the small businesses and the challenges they face. Many regional chambers have spoken to us about that, so we listened and we took action.”

— Hon. Glenn Thibeault, Minister of Energy (October 26, 2016)

○ ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT: *CLOSING ONTARIO'S TOURISM GAP*

Ask: In *Closing the Tourism Gap: Creating a Long-Term Advantage for Ontario*, the OCC advocated that the Province develop a government-wide Ontario tourism strategy with measurable targets. We also highlighted the need to work with tourism operators to reduce the regulatory and cost burdens within the industry by adding the tourism sector to the Red Tape Challenge.

- ✓ **Win:** In the *Strategic Framework for Tourism in Ontario*, the government explicitly acknowledged the efforts and leadership presented by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce through our solution-based advocacy approach in the tourism sector. The report recognizes our efforts stating, “the government is encouraged by the leadership that industry is already taking. Recently, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce released a forward-looking report on how the sector can collaborate to improve avenues for success. The report provides an examination of provincial tourism industry trends and presents recommendations for government and industry to work together to boost long-term competitiveness and generate sustainable demand for Ontario tourism.”
- ✓ **Win:** The goal set out within the government’s strategic framework (“To meet or exceed global industry growth over a five-year period, which the world tourism organization estimates will grow by an average of 3.3 percent per year until 2030”) satisfies the OCC’s recommendation of a long-term strategy with a clear industry growth target.
- ✓ **Win:** The Ontario government signaled that it will add the tourism sector to the Red Tape Challenge, a direct recommendation of the OCC to help improve the operating environment for business.

○ ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT: *BROADBAND INTERNET*

Ask: On July 18, the OCC sent a letter to Premier Kathleen Wynne asking the provincial government to commit infrastructure dollars to developing and expanding broadband infrastructure across rural and remote Ontario. In our federal pre-budget submission, we also urged the Canadian government to move beyond its Connecting Canadians initiative and further invest in Ontario broadband internet.

- ✓ **Win:** The Ontario government announced plans to invest \$90 million dollars as part of the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) project, which will expand access to broadband internet by delivering fibre optic coverage to over 300 communities with a total population of 3.5 million.



- ✓ **Win:** In early 2017, the federal government launched its Connect to Innovate Program (a successor to Connecting Canadians), which will invest \$500 million by 2021 in order to bring high-speed Internet to rural and remote communities across Canada.

○ ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT: IMMIGRATION REFORM

Ask: In *Passport to Prosperity: Ontario's Priorities for Immigration Reform*, the OCC urged the federal government to return the economic category immigration target to the 2015 range of 172,100–186,700 by no later than 2017/18.

- ✓ **Win:** During his keynote address at the launch event of the OCC report in April 2016, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration John McCallum indicated his support for this and the other recommendations in the report.
- ✓ **Win:** In October 2016, Minister John McCallum announced that the federal government plans to keep the immigration targets for 2017 at 300,000. However, the new plan represents an increase in a higher target for economic immigrants – increasing from 160,6000 in 2016 to 172,500 in 2017. This measure will contribute to the ability of Canadian employers to attract the global talent that they need to remain competitive.
- ✓ **Win:** In November 2016, Minister John McCallum announced that additional points would be awarded to applicants whose degrees were obtained in Canada. International student graduates will now receive 15 to 20 points through the application process, depending on the length and level of education they've received in Canada. This policy is consistent with a recommendation in *Passport to Prosperity* which urged government to award additional points to graduates of Canadian colleges and universities.

○ ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT: ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Ask: Recognizing the burden of the proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP), the OCC called on government to delay its implementation to provide more time for businesses to adjust to the new financial obligations. We also asked that the government provide greater clarity and broader classification for “comparability” to include Defined Contribution Plans. All the while, the OCC was working toward our stated, preferred option to support retirement security which is a national Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) enhancement instead of a stand-alone ORPP.

- ✓ **Win:** In June 2016, Ontario Finance Minister Charles Sousa announced that the Government of Ontario would be abandoning the ORPP in favour of an enhanced CPP, avoiding increased regulatory fragmentation and thus administrative burden – mitigating significant consequences for Ontario's business community.



○ **ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT:** *INCREASING FINANCIAL LITERACY FOR ONTARIO STUDENTS*

Ask: Through our resolution process last May, the Ontario Chamber Network identified the need to build a stronger business/commerce curriculum in Ontario schools which would emphasize financial literacy. This message was delivered during our advocacy campaign on the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP). Throughout the campaign, the OCC highlighted the positive benefits that increased financial literacy can have on individual saving behaviour and urged the Ontario government to take steps to formally build financial literacy programming into the Ontario school curriculum.

- ✓ **Win:** As announced on March 23, 2017, Ontario will be rolling out pilot projects at 28 high schools aimed at revamping the Grade 10 careers course to include financial literacy. The pilot project, which will involve over 700 students, lays the foundation for the inclusion of financial literacy as part of the school curriculum by fall 2018.

○ **ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT:** *SUPPORTING INNOVATION IN THE ONTARIO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM*

Ask: In the 2016 Health Transformation Initiative, the OCC asked for improved pathways for Ontario health and life science technologies into our public health care system, as well as more supports for start-ups in this sector to bridge the commercialization “valley of death”.

- ✓ **Win:** On April 3, 2017, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced the first recipients of the Health Technologies Fund, which supports the development of technologies that can bring value and improved care to the health care system. Additionally, he named the first three Innovation Brokers, who are leaders capable of connecting providers, patients and other stakeholders to innovative health technology companies.



2017 POLICY PROGRAMS

As we do each year, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce has shaped its policy direction through consultation with our members, the Chamber Network resolution process, consideration of government priorities and by building on the work of the previous year.

In 2017, we will focus on three critical policy areas, as well as continue our long-running advocacy on Ontario's energy challenge.



Health Transformation Initiative

As demonstrated in our 2016 Health Transformation Initiative, the OCC's approach to health care reform is not merely about addressing the challenge of fiscal sustainability, but about acknowledging that the public system can be an economic driver. Health is a growing sector world-wide, with incredible expansion in both demand and innovation; Ontario, with its world-class talent and top-notch research facilities, has potential to be a significant leader in this sector. Our health care system should be able to tap into that potential to deliver both positive health and fiscal outcomes for all Ontarians.

This year, the OCC will build upon the research we conducted in 2016 to address these challenges with government. In addition, we intend to bring together expertise and perspectives from across sectors – business, non-profit, academia, and government – to examine three areas of critical importance to the personal health of Ontarians and the economic health of the province:

- **Mental Health: A productivity and workforce perspective:** To mark Mental Health Week, the OCC hosted a half-day event that highlighted the business case for addressing mental health in the workplace. The agenda featured data-driven insights into mental wellness in the workplace, experts who identified how to support employers of all sizes in starting the discussion about mental health, and best practices from leading Ontario businesses. This event will be followed by a brief summarizing the insights and identifying the resources discussed.
- **Digital Health and Big Data:** This fall, the OCC will host experts on the digital health revolution for a major symposium. The discussion will seek to identify how to utilize data-driven techniques in Ontario, and how public-private collaboration can make change a reality. The symposium will be followed with a brief that outlines strategies for better integrating digital health tools and big data analytics into Ontario's health care system.
- **Our Aging Population: The impact on health and labour in Ontario:** In a crossover event with our Skills & Workforce Development Policy Program, the OCC will convene a multi-ministry panel of Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers to discuss how Ontario's changing demographics are influencing our health care system and our labour market; specifically, how this will change the way the government incentivizes economic activity and manages budgets. Discussion will be coloured by an economic examination of the impact Baby Boomers are having on labour participation and market activity.

Review the 2016 Health Transformation Initiative at transformhealth.ca

Skills & Workforce Development

Viewing Ontario's workforce from afar, the story appears to be a positive one: more than 600,000 net new jobs have been created since the depths of the recession, and the government is projecting the creation of an additional 323,000 jobs between 2016 and 2019. Ontario's unemployment rate of 6.7 percent is below the national average. Based on these indicators, it would appear as though the province is supported by a robust workforce and, further, that employees experience more stable employment now than ever before. However, the experience of Ontario business is telling a different story. Sixty-two percent of OCC members have attempted to recruit staff in the last six months but only 14 percent of those did not experience a challenge in hiring. The top challenge cited (by 60 percent of members) was finding an individual with the proper qualifications.

The OCC's policy objective is to ensure that all regions across Ontario have access to the skilled workforce required to compete in the global economy. In 2017, we will work towards this objective through the following initiatives:

- **Addressing the Skills Mismatch in Ontario:** In April 2017, the OCC convened business leaders, educators, and service providers to discuss critical issues affecting workforce development in Ontario. The forum provided participants with an overview of the projected occupational outlooks in Ontario by region and included three policy breakout sessions designed to ensure that participants meaningfully engaged in a series of targeted discussions pertaining to the skills mismatch. A report outlining key findings and recommendations will follow, supported by economic analysis from the Business Prosperity Index.
- **Capitalizing on Disruptive Change in the Workforce:** The advent of new technologies is associated with new products, new markets and new professional opportunities. This report will focus on the impact of disruptive change from new technologies, business models, and labour market realities on the economy as Ontario transitions into the fourth industrial revolution. In addition, the research will identify opportunities to leverage disruption to innovate, improving productivity and raising standards of living. A launch event for the report will follow.
- **Our Aging Population: The impact on health and labour in Ontario:** In a crossover event with our Health Transformation Policy Program, the OCC will convene a multi-ministry panel of Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers to discuss how Ontario's changing demographics are influencing our health care system and our labour market; specifically, how this will change the way the government incentivizes economic activity and manages budgets. Discussion will be coloured by an economic examination of the impact Baby Boomers are having on labour participation and market activity, through the lens of the Business Prosperity Index.



Environment & Infrastructure

After decades of underinvestment, governments in Ontario and Canada are making large-scale investments to update and expand our infrastructure stock. The Government of Ontario currently has a plan to invest \$160 billion over 12 years, beginning in 2014-15. At the same time, the Government of Canada intends to invest over \$180 billion in Canadian infrastructure projects during the next eleven years. In both cases, investments are being made across a range of different areas, including education, transit and transportation, buildings, and trade.

Alongside these commitments, the federal and provincial governments will continue to move ahead with their plans to incentivize a transition to a low-carbon economy. This year, for example, Ontario instituted a price on carbon emissions via a cap and trade system. How infrastructure investments are made over the next decade will be an important determinant of our ability to meet climate change objectives.

From the perspective of the OCC, these initiatives present the province with a critical opportunity to set the foundations for long-term, sustainable economic growth and prosperity. To accomplish this objective, it is essential that we invest in the right projects and manage them effectively. If not, these investments could instead produce new up-front costs for Ontarians and destabilizing debt for the Province.

In the 2017 Environment & Infrastructure Policy Program, the OCC will seek to inform infrastructure planning and development priorities in Ontario to maximize the economic potential of Ontario and Canada's investments, while achieving our environmental objectives. This will be completed under the banner of two key initiatives:

- **Towards Ontario's Long-Term Infrastructure Plan:** The OCC will host an event that identifies key priorities for the Long-Term Infrastructure Plan (LTIP), expected to be delivered by the province by the end of 2017. The conversations at the event will help guide a major report on infrastructure later in the year, with key findings and recommendations supported by economic analysis from the Business Prosperity Index.
- **Linking Cap and Trade Systems:** The OCC will bring together Ontario businesses, government representatives, and market stakeholders to provide an update on the state of the cap and trade system. The conversation will focus on key questions facing business and provide critical information as Ontario moves to link the system with California and Quebec in 2018. A report that provides outcomes and key learnings from the event will follow.



ADVOCACY FOCUS: Ontario's Energy Challenge

Energy is top of mind for all Ontarians, as the province's future economic prosperity is intrinsically tied to the reliability and cost effectiveness of our energy supply. The Ontario Chamber Network and its members have consistently reported that the price of electricity is undermining business' capacity to grow, hire new workers, and ultimately remain competitive. Twenty-two percent of OCC members believe that a reduction in energy/electricity costs would have the greatest impact on their organization's health and growth, while a further 51 percent of businesses ranked it among their top three policy concerns.

As a starting point for our advocacy on this file in the coming year, the OCC provided recommendations for the 2017 Long-Term Energy Plan (LTEP). Within the submission, we called on government to ensure that future energy policies reflect the principles of affordability, transparency and flexibility. We argued that a thoughtful balancing of these principles would promote economic prosperity, business competitiveness and strengthen ratepayer confidence in Ontario.

We will continue our focused advocacy efforts to ensure electricity pricing in Ontario becomes predictable, stable and transparent so that ratepayers and industry can adequately understand and plan their energy expenditure.

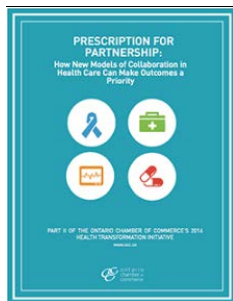


RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Research is at the core of our advocacy efforts. In addition to comprehensive policy reports, we respond to emerging issues through letters and submissions to government decision-makers that are based on principled thinking and direct consultation with our membership.



Prescription for Partnership: How New Models of Collaboration in Health Care Can Make Outcomes a Priority | May, 2016



The second report within our Health Transformation Initiative examined the role public-private partnerships can play in re-orienting a health care system that too often makes decisions exclusively in response to budgetary pressure.

The OCC offers recommendations for building these partnerships, including commissioning: an evidence-based approach to health care service design, procurement, and delivery that prioritizes patient outcomes and encourages collaboration between all stakeholders. This approach enables innovation in access, quality, and cost that can have a positive impact across the entire health care system.

Letter to Minister Glen Murray regarding cap and trade | May, 2016

In a letter submitted to Glen Murray, Ontario Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the OCC outlined four critical questions regarding specific aspects of the province's incoming cap and trade program, including the economic impact of the program and what the design of the program will look like post-2020. To allow sufficient time to properly design and implement the cap and trade system, we called on the government to consider delaying implementation until 2018.

Our Cap and Trade letter in the news

"The Ontario Chamber of Commerce is urging the provincial government to delay the implementation of its cap-and-trade plan for one year, saying key questions remain unanswered."

— Global News (May 12, 2016)



Submission regarding the Strategic Framework for Tourism in Ontario | August, 2016

In this submission, the OCC presented five key areas of feedback for the government to incorporate into its final Strategic Framework for Tourism in Ontario. These recommendations included a need to reduce the cumulative burden experienced by tourism operators, improve coordination in the tourism sector to maximize scarce dollars, enhance cooperation between the provincial and federal governments, invest in trade-enabling infrastructure, and clearly define and monitor outcomes of the strategic framework. In the Strategic Framework for Tourism in Ontario, the government acknowledged the leadership of the OCC on this file, and accepted a number of our recommendations.

Letter to Premier Wynne on expanding broadband infrastructure in rural Ontario | July, 2016

In July, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce released an open letter to Premier Kathleen Wynne calling on the government to commit dedicated provincial infrastructure funds to developing and expanding broadband infrastructure in remote and rural areas of the province where there is simply not a case for private sector investment.

The Ontario government later announced plans to invest \$90 million dollars as part of the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) project, which will expand access to broadband internet by delivering fibre optic coverage to over 300 communities with a total population of 3.5 million. Additionally, the federal government launched Connect to Innovate, a program that will invest \$500 million by 2021 to bring high-speed Internet to rural and remote communities across Canada.

Our Broadband Infrastructure letter in the news

With record investments being made by government in transit and transportation infrastructure, the chamber network is calling on the provincial government to recognize, through infrastructure dollars, that access to high-speed Internet is also essential for Ontario businesses to compete in the 21st century global economy.”

— Sudbury Star (July 28, 2016)



Adopting our Advantage: Supporting a Thriving Health Science Sector in Ontario | October, 2016



While Ontario is an established leader in the health sciences sector, there is a sense that much of our potential is unrealized, as we lack necessary capacity to capitalize, commercialize, and diffuse innovation. Most worryingly, Ontario companies face serious hurdles bringing their discoveries to market in this province, thus limiting return on both public and private investment.

In the third Health Transformation Initiative report, the OCC identifies the central challenges to the health sector's growth: access to local capital, access to experienced managerial talent, and access to the public health care market.

In early 2017, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announced the Health Technologies Fund and the first group of Innovation Brokers, two initiatives dedicated to solving the problems highlighted in this report.

Letter to Premier Wynne on landfill assessment methodology review | August, 2016

In a letter to Premier Wynne, Finance Minister Sousa, and Environment Minister Murray regarding a recent report on the landfill assessment methodology review, the OCC expressed a series of concerns about the results of the review. These include mandatory data reporting without a right of appeal, the creation of a new property tax class and ratios specific to landfills, and a lack of clarity (including a lack of evidence or analysis) as to how the recommended changes will be constructed and implemented, or the broader impact of their enactment. The letter emphasized that, in order to promote and maintain economic growth, taxes (and any assessments related to them) must remain predictable, fair, and transparent.

A subsequent report from the reviewing agency brought clarity and nuance to the questions of property tax classes and ratios, providing for sector-specific distinctions for landfills. It also affirmed that assessments and taxation must be predictable and fair.

Submission to the Review of Ontario's Solvency Funding Framework for Defined Benefit Pension Plans | September, 2016

The OCC provided a submission to the Ministry of Finance's review of the province's solvency funding rules for providers of Defined Benefit (DB) pension plans. Ontario's rules place significant financial pressure on DB plan sponsors and have made the provision of DB pension plans increasingly unaffordable relative to other jurisdictions. To improve the competitiveness of businesses and enhance the sustainability of the province's existing DB pension plans, the OCC encouraged the government to eliminate the current solvency rules and adopt a strengthened going concern approach.



Letter to Premier Wynne regarding the design of a recreational marijuana distribution system | September, 2016

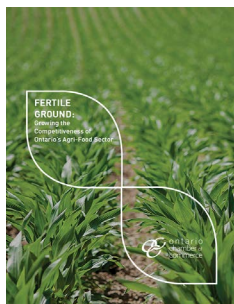
The OCC called on government to engage the private sector as an effective partner in a socially responsible legalized marijuana distribution system. We also asked that municipal governments have a seat at the table when the province begins developing this important strategy.

Our Recreational Marijuana Distribution Letter in the news

"While saying it is not endorsing an entirely free-market model, the business lobby is asking the premier to forego an LCBO-type system and allow recreational marijuana to be sold by government-licensed private retailers."

— Toronto Star (September 14, 2016)

Fertile Ground: Growing Competitiveness of Ontario's Agri-food Sector October, 2016



The agri-food sector is a significant economic driver in the province, employing 1 in 9 Ontarians and representing \$36.4 billion in GDP. In *Fertile Ground: Growing the Competitiveness of Ontario's Agri-food Sector*, the OCC highlighted the economic contributions of this sector, while recognizing that a variety of factors are adversely affecting its competitiveness and the capacity of industry to meet the Premier's challenge to double its annual growth rate and create 120,000 jobs by 2020.

The report argues that, to sustain the competitiveness of agriculture and food processing sector in Ontario, it is critical government adopt an approach to regulatory management that is flexible and responsive to the economic context in which agribusinesses operate. In order to attract, retain and grow agri-food businesses, government must also develop a strategic framework that promotes the efficient production of food products, develops the skills of its workforce, improves access to risk management tools, and incentivizes innovation in the sector.



Fertile Ground in the news

“In the report, the chamber highlighted some of the challenges to consumer safety and security, new forms of employment under the sharing economy and regulatory protection of industries threatened by unconventional new entrants.”

— Windsor Star (October 5, 2016)

Obstacles and Opportunities: The Importance of Small Business in Ontario | October, 2016



In October 2016, the OCC, in partnership with local chambers of commerce and boards of trade, launched the *Small Business: Too Big to Ignore* campaign to champion this vital component of Ontario's economy. In addition to highlighting the success of small businesses in Ontario, our objective throughout the campaign was to identify and develop potential policy solutions to the most significant barriers to small business growth.

The resulting report captures the feedback we received from small business owners throughout a province-wide consultation process and provides recommendations designed to ensure the future success of small businesses in Ontario.

Subsequently, on March 1, 2017, the Ontario government launched its Small Business Innovation Challenge. Through this initiative, the Province is inviting small- and medium-sized businesses to develop, test and demonstrate innovative solutions to challenges that will enhance government programs and services.



Obstacles and Opportunities in the news

"Small businesses are asking the province for a 'regulatory concierge service' to make it easier to deal with the three levels of government — one of a number of recommendations outlined in a new report from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

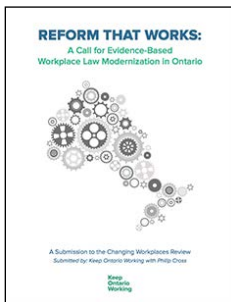
The Ontario Chamber of Commerce, which notes that small businesses employ 3 million people in the province, also raised alarms about rising energy prices and called that 'the greatest source of frustration.'"

—Toronto Star (October 17, 2016)

Submission to the Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review | October, 2016

In this submission, the OCC provided its comments to the government's review of four land use plans affecting development in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH): *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, the *Greenbelt Plan*, the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan* and the *Niagara Escarpment Plan* ("the Plans"). The submission listed four principles that the government should employ as it makes changes to the Plans, including that the government should consider the economic impact of any decisions and that outcomes of these decisions should be regularly monitored and publicly reported. With the region set to experience considerable growth over the next few decades, the province must take this opportunity to create streamlined and integrated planning conditions to accommodate this population boom in the most beneficial way possible.

Reform that Works: A Call for Evidence-Based Workplace Law Modernization in Ontario | October, 2016



In October, the OCC issued a submission to government in response to the Changing Workplaces Review (CWR), on behalf of the Keep Ontario Working Group, which represents leading employers and sector associations. This submission was a result of consultation and advocacy work conducted throughout the summer of 2016.

While the group acknowledges that workplaces are changing and that labour and employment legislation should be modernized, they caution that employers and employees alike cannot risk public policy changes that would place unintended burdens on them. In light of this concern, the group has developed several key policy options in the submission, calling



for evidence-based workplace modernization, with a particular focus of caution in the following areas: Education and Enforcement, Scheduling Provisions, Labour Certification Rules, Sector Exemptions, Joint/Common Employers, Sectoral Bargaining, and Minimum Standards.

Reform That Works in the news

"The Ontario Chamber of Commerce, which notes that small businesses employ 3 million people in the province, also raised alarms about rising energy prices and called that 'the greatest source of frustration.'"

—**Toronto Star (October 17, 2016)**

"'We're challenging whether or not such sweeping reforms are necessary,' said Karl Baldauf, vice-president of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. Its 60,000 members employ some two million people in the province.

'We have to make sure that you're not putting businesses in a position where they will actually be less inclined to hire or less inclined to expand as a result of new, onerous regulations,' Baldauf said in an interview with CBC News."

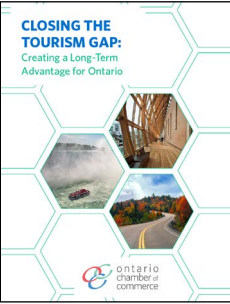
—**CBC News (February 28, 2017)**

"...the Keep Ontario Working group takes the position that ill-considered changes to the Employment Standards Act and the Labour Relations Act could actually have the reverse effect of lowering employment. With increased Canada Pension Plan benefit premiums, the downstream effects of cap and trade and a rising minimum wage, 'I think it's fair to say that there's a perspective among many employers that the cost of doing business is increasing in this province,' says Mr. Karl Baldauf."

—**Globe and Mail (December 5, 2016)**



Closing the Tourism Gap: Creating a Long-Term Advantage for Ontario | November, 2016



In this report, the OCC examined the state of Ontario’s tourism industry and sought to answer the question: What steps can Ontario take to create a long-term tourism advantage? We quantified the impact of Ontario’s tourism gap—the growing gap between international and Ontario tourist visitation—on visitor spending in the province, and provided a set of nine recommendations to government and industry to help close this gap. These recommendations addressed the need to engage in strategic and evidence-based planning, improve the tourism business environment, enhance visitor access, and support tourism marketing.

The Ontario government’s long-term tourism strategy, Growing Tourism Together, was released soon after our report. The government explicitly referenced the report in its long-term strategy and adopted some of its recommendations, including adding tourism to the Red Tape Challenge and setting a growth target for the industry.

Care in Our Control: Managing Innovation in Ontario’s Multi-Payer Health Care System | November, 2016



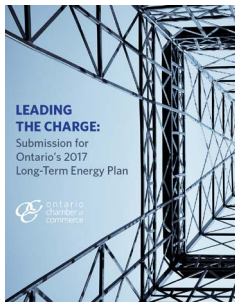
The fourth report in the Health Transformation Initiative series examined why Ontario struggles to capture value for money spent in the health care system.

As health innovations become more sophisticated, patient quality of life greatly improves. However, the Ontario health care system has difficulty properly evaluating and adopting health innovations like pharmaceuticals and medical devices, placing fiscal pressure on both public and private payers (including individuals and employers).

In order to adopt innovation while ensuring the province’s system is fiscally sustainable, the government must better understand the value that innovation can bring across the system, to other public services, and to the health and wellness of Ontarians.



Submission on the 2017 Long-Term Energy Plan (LTEP) | December, 2016



In December, the OCC called on government to ensure that future energy policies reflect the principles of affordability, transparency and flexibility. We argued that a thoughtful balancing of these principles would promote economic prosperity and business competitiveness, and strengthen ratepayer confidence in Ontario. One of the submission's top recommendations included a call for the adoption of a capacity market system which, if implemented, would provide a cost-effective solution for future energy procurement in Ontario.

At a speech given at the Economic Club of Canada on February 24, Energy Minister Glen Thibeault echoed the OCC's call for a competitive market style approach to energy procurement stating, "government no longer intends to favour one type of energy production over another, but will instead implement a competitive bidding process, or an auction-based approach, that will drive future energy procurements in Ontario." Additionally, the Minister has constantly re-iterated the need that future energy planning be "technology agnostic", a sentiment expressed by the OCC in this submission.

Furthermore, on March 2, the Ontario Government introduced its *Fair Hydro Plan*. While largely targeted at residential ratepayers, the enhanced 17 percent reduction will also cover 500,000 small businesses and comes as a direct result of the OCC's advocacy on the energy file throughout 2016.

Our LTEP submission in the news

"The province can buy electricity cheaper – resulting in lower bills for consumers – by asking for competitive bids from energy suppliers, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce says.

It's time to replace an outdated model in which the government decides how power should be generated and signing long-term contracts with companies to produce it, the business group argues in a report to be released Wednesday."

— Toronto Star (December 14, 2016)



Letter to Minister Chrystia Freeland highlighting importance of strengthened Canada-U.S. trade | January, 2017

This letter to Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs called for continued and strengthened trade with the U.S. Businesses in Ontario and across Canada are highly integrated into the American economy, a relationship that yields considerable mutual benefits. To ensure continued economic success for both countries, it is essential that this relationship be maintained and improved. Regulatory misalignments remain that deter business opportunities, increase costs, and inhibit trade. We hope that the governments of Canada and Ontario can maintain important working relationships with the U.S. that will lead to continued shared prosperity.

Letter to Premier Wynne regarding proposed Toronto hotel tax | January, 2017

In this letter, the OCC cautioned against the imposition of a four percent hotel tax in Toronto, as requested by Toronto City Council. Tourism Toronto, the organization integral to supporting and growing tourism in the region, derives the majority of its budget from a voluntary Destination Marketing Program in partnership with the region’s hotels. A hotel tax could put this source of revenue, and tourism promotion activities in the region, at risk.

Health Transformation: An Action Plan for Ontario | January, 2017



The final report in the Health Transformation Initiative series draws focus towards the recurring themes that have been identified over the course of the year-long project.

The previous four reports in the series have indicated how we can make our health care system an economic driver and how the private sector can add value to public care. In this action plan, we identify three strategic themes that have emerged from our research and consultation, and include recommendations the Government of Ontario should consider as it reforms Ontario’s health care system.

At the release event, both the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Patient Ombudsman spoke highly of the Health Transformation Initiative series, indicating its alignment with their vision for system reform and encouraged the OCC and its network to continue our advocacy on behalf of business in the health care space.



The Health Transformation Initiative in the news

“The Ontario Chamber of Commerce wants more efficient procedures — not radical surgery — to keep the province’s health-care system alive and kicking.”

— Toronto Star (January 26, 2017)

Ontario Economic Report | February, 2017



The Ontario Economic Report (OER) is the OCC’s new, annual policy document aimed at spurring growth and prosperity in Ontario. Each year the OER will present the collective voice of our membership through the Business Confidence Survey, the Business Prosperity Index and the Economic Outlook. It will also detail our policy priorities for the coming year, based on economic research and consultation with our members.

Throughout 2017, the OCC will present the findings of the OER to chambers of commerce and boards of trade across the Province, as well as to government and opposition officials.

Ontario Economic Report in the news

“Businesses ‘are unsure of the stability of the wider provincial economy and critical of the impact government policy will have on their organization’ the Ontario Chamber of Commerce annual survey finds.”

— Toronto Star (January 26, 2017)



Provincial Pre-Budget Submission | February, 2017



Drawing specifically on the resolutions passed by Ontario's Chamber Network at our annual general meeting, our *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission* outlined four key budget priorities and 13 specific recommendations that we believe the Government of Ontario should adopt to restore fiscal balance and spur economic growth for the economy. Our submission outlined many opportunities for business and government to work together to develop a coordinated response to the fiscal, regulatory and infrastructure challenges currently faced by the province. The recommendations contained within this submission were presented to the Standing Committee of Finance and Economic Affairs as part of the provincial government's pre-budget consultations.

Federal Pre-Budget Submission | February, 2017



In this submission, the OCC presented nine recommendations across four key policy areas to the Ministry of Finance as part of the federal government's pre-budget consultations. The submission focused on the need for Canada to develop a strategic plan for economic growth that focuses on: correcting the fiscal gap for Ontarians, strengthening Canada's trade relationships to spur economic growth, boosting productivity and growth through infrastructure spending, and stewarding the innovation ecosystem through appropriate programs, incentives and taxation.

Letter to Premier Wynne addressing deficiencies in the provincial arbitration system | February, 2017

On February 28, 2017, the OCC sent an open letter to Premier Wynne regarding Ontario's interest arbitration system. While the OCC and its members greatly value the contributions and protections that emergency services personnel provide to our communities, we recognize that the costs of these services have increased at over three times the rate of inflation annually since 2002.

The letter highlights that the cost escalation resulting from settlements is unsustainable, particularly in an era of fiscal restraint in which municipalities are greatly restricted in their options to generate new revenue.



Letter to the Prime Minister regarding the Canada-US softwood lumber dispute | March, 2017

In partnership with the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec (FCCQ), the OCC sent a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau advocating on behalf of the interests of Canada's forest industry, which is concerned about new, protectionist measures in a Canada-US softwood lumber dispute.

The FCCQ and the OCC fear this dispute could be lengthy, jeopardizing the competitiveness of many businesses across Canada. We encourage the federal government to intervene in this dispute, and call on the Prime Minister to implement a loan guarantee program for companies affected by the dispute to protect the future of our forest industry and ensure continued economic development in Québec and Ontario.

Letter to Premier Wynne on the cap and trade system | April, 2017

In April, the OCC sent an open letter to Premier Kathleen Wynne calling on the government to take action to contain the costs of the cap and trade system and to better support Ontario's business community.

The OCC warns that the province must measure the impact of cap and trade among other input costs to fully understand the cumulative burden facing Ontario's business community. Because business competitiveness is directly affected by the costs associated with cap and trade, the Government of Ontario must ensure that the revenue and design of the system is allocated and developed in a way that supports the business community.

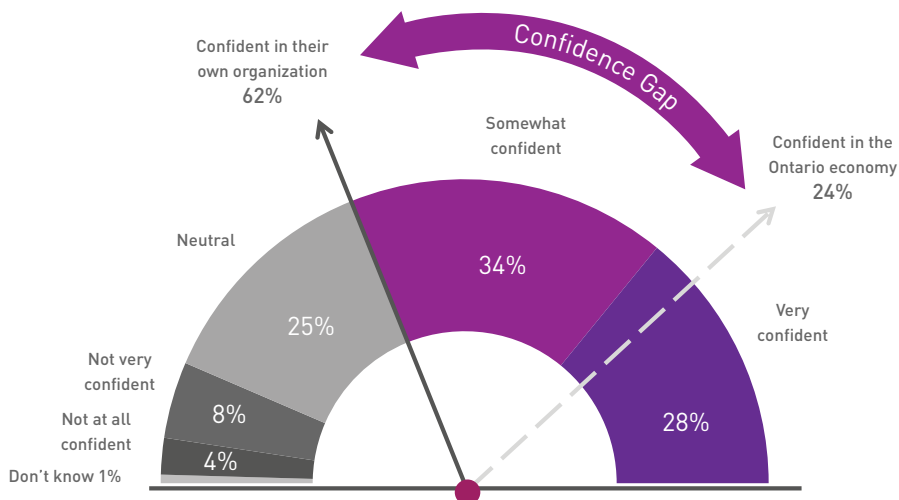


MEMBER SURVEYS

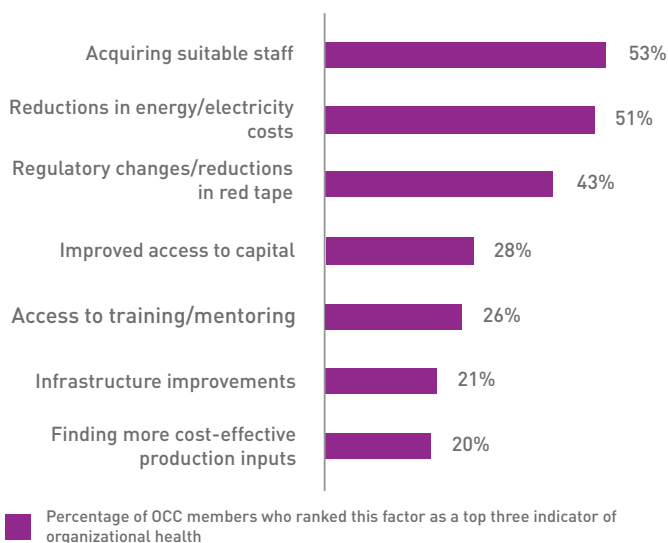
The OCC's policy surveys have gauged opinion on issues that matter to Ontario businesses. Last year, we expanded our surveys to take the pulse of all Ontarians. This research has become one of the most significant indicators of business opinion in the province – and form the foundation of both our advocacy work and our media coverage.



Despite a lack of provincial confidence, **nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of members are confident** about their own organization's economic outlook.

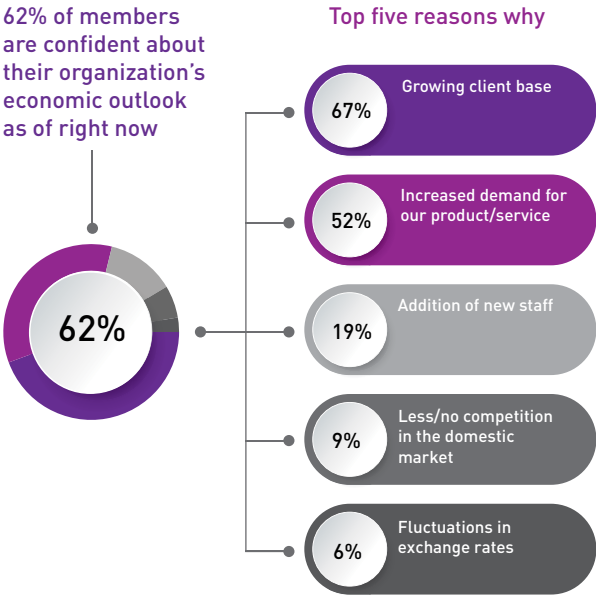


What factors are most important to your organization's health?

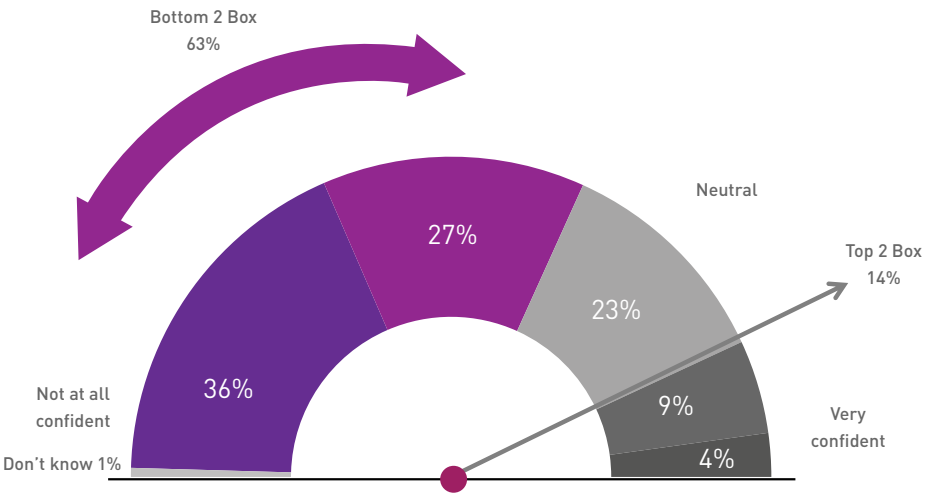




How confident are you in your own organization's economic outlook as of right now?

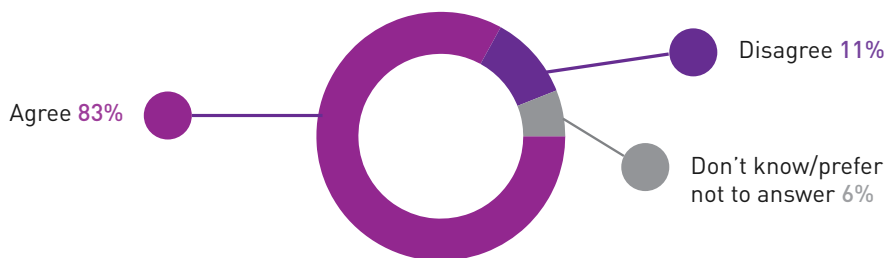


How confident are you that Ontario's health care system is sustainable for the future, i.e. able to fund a consistently high level of care?

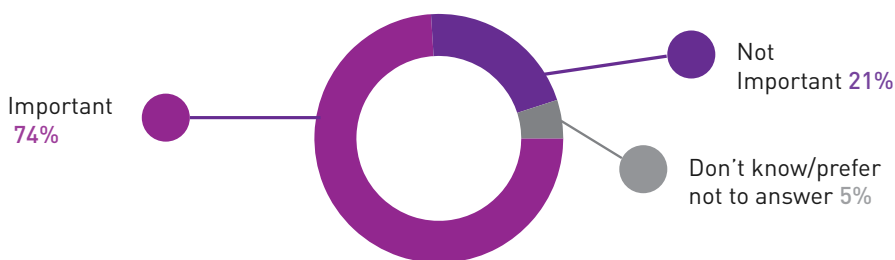




In order to assess impact on jobs and the economy, the Government of Ontario should conduct a cost-benefit analysis of changes to labour or employment legislation before those changes takes effect.



Please indicate how important you think it is that the government develop strategies to reduce the financial consequences of climate change and variable weather conditions on industry.





ADVOCACY IN THE NEWS

Making headlines – at the local, provincial, and national level – is a cornerstone of our advocacy strategy. Our media relations approach ensures that we remain a leading voice in the key public policy conversations that matter to Ontario's business community.

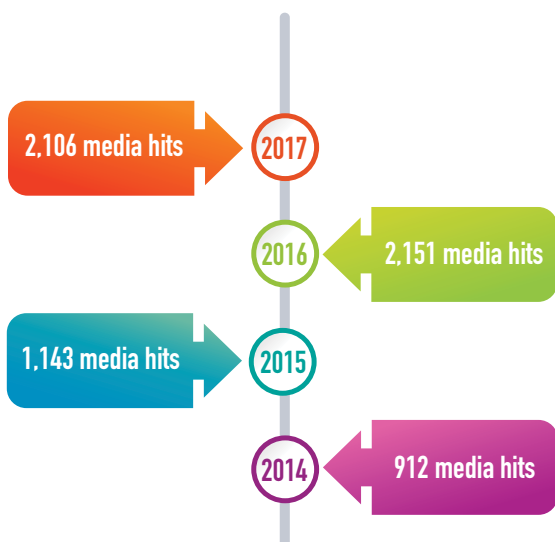


The OCC has continued to work closely with members of the Chamber Network to co-release a number of our policy publications, including *Fertile Ground: Growing the Competitiveness of Ontario's Agri-food Sector*, *Obstacles and Opportunities: The Importance of Small Business in Ontario*, and the *Ontario Economic Report*. Our objective with this strategy remains the same: to help our members lead the conversation on policy issues in their communities. In doing so, our goal is to support our partners in strengthening their position as thought leaders on crucial issues affecting their members.

It is a result of the engagement from the Chamber Network that we have been able to broaden our media reach and strengthen our voice on key issues across the province. Thank you to those chambers of commerce and boards of trade that have co-released many important publications with us over the past year. We look forward to providing you with more opportunities to co-release with us on various reports and submissions over the course of 2017-18.

Over the past three years, we have substantially enhanced our media presence:

Earned media hits have grown by 131% since 2014*



* Each tab represents data from April 1st of the previous year to March 31st of the year indicated. Figures are based on Meltwater media monitoring.

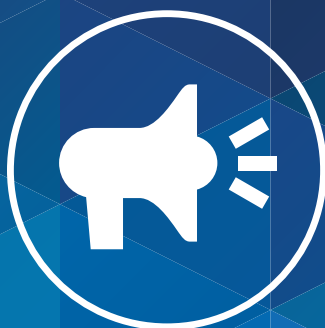


Highlights include:

- **Frequent coverage in Canada's major national newspapers**, including the *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star*, *Toronto Sun*, and *National Post*.
- **Regular appearances on radio and television**, including CBC Radio, Talk Radio (across Ontario), Business News Network (BNN), Global News, CTV News and CP24.
- **Frequent coverage in Ontario's major daily locals**, including the *Windsor Star*, the *Hamilton Spectator*, the *Sudbury Star*, the *Kingston Whig-Standard*, and the *Peterborough Examiner*.

Average daily media mentions in 2015-16





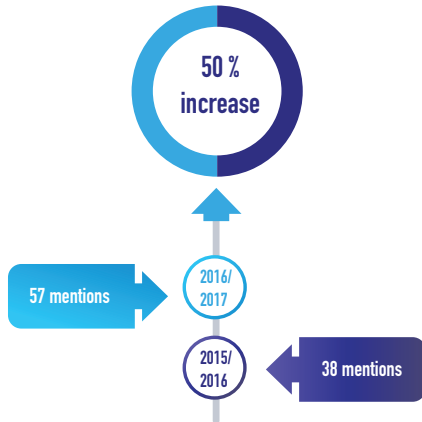
OCC ADVOCACY AT QUEEN'S PARK

Gaining the attention of Ontario's political leaders is the primary goal of our advocacy strategy. Through our government relations work, the voice of the Chamber Network is heard across Queen's Park, including within the walls of the legislature.



Between April 2016 and April 2017, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce was mentioned 57 times in Hansard, the record of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

This represents a 50% increase over last year.



“The concerns of Ontario Chamber of Commerce head Allan O’Dette have been well aired here and in the media, and that’s because he has given a very thoughtful, balanced critique of the Liberal government’s approach.”

— Monte McNaughton, MPP for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex (May 16, 2016)

“In regard to taking action now on Bill 172, I appreciate what the member from Wellington–Halton Hills had to say about the request from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. I would like to assure him that we are working with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce to phase in cap-and-trade. At the same time, we also have to give businesses some certainty, and we very much appreciate working with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.”

— John Fraser, MPP for Ottawa South (May 12, 2016)



"Mr. Speaker, we don't only take the advice of our chamber of commerce very seriously; we've worked in partnership with that chamber for over a decade now to make Ontario the most generous place in North America when it comes to working with small business."

[...]

"Mr. Speaker, we're working very closely with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. They've written a report that completely aligns very much with the work we're doing. They praised us on some of the things we're doing to give our small businesses breaks on energy rates. We're going to keep working with them to build an economy that we'll be proud to pass on to our kids and grandkids."

[...]

"When it comes to listening to our chamber, we've been listening. We continue to work in partnership with them... We will continue to work with our Ontario Chamber of Commerce."

— Hon. Brad Duguid, Minister of Economic Development and Growth (October 19, 2016)

"I also want to thank Allan O'Dette and his team at the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Speaker, we work arm in arm with them as well. They're always keen for us to make these changes and these moves. He has been very, very helpful."

— Hon. Brad Duguid, Minister of Economic Development and Growth (October 4, 2016)



“On the topic of drawing businesses to Ontario, the Ontario government should also look at what the Ontario Chamber of Commerce has to say about our current hydro system in this province. The 2017 economic report states that the experience that many households have with respect to rising electricity rates are amplified when it comes to businesses. The report goes on to note that the uncertainty with respect to these rates is discouraging businesses from investing here in this province, and that means fewer jobs for the people of Ontario.””

— **Jameet Singh, MPP for Bramalea-Gore-Malton (February 28, 2017)**

“As a past president of the Strathroy and District Chamber of Commerce, I can tell you that the members and leaders of chambers of commerce are some of the most active, engaged and involved people in our communities. It’s a vital organization here in the province. But only 24% of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce membership is confident in the Ontario economy.”

(...)

“The Ontario Chamber of Commerce is our largest and most inclusive and credible business network.”

— **Monte McNaughton, MPP for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex (March 27, 2017)**



SERIES AND EVENTS

The OCC is proud to host numerous policy, advocacy, and consultative events throughout the year. Additionally, we present an annual line-up of signature events that celebrate business in Ontario, connect our members with government decision-makers, and demonstrate thought leadership to major stakeholders.



Minister's Employers Tables

On behalf of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, the OCC partnered with local Chambers of Commerce to facilitate five Minister's Employers Tables (METs) in communities across the province. These METs launched in Toronto on January 27th, 2017 and were followed by roundtables in Kitchener-Waterloo, Hamilton, Belleville, Thunder Bay, Ottawa and Peterborough.

The roundtables are designed to engage local employers and service providers on immigration and employment issues. This year's series of METs asked employers to consider opportunities to strengthen Ontario's innovation economy through the optimization of international talent. Employers were asked to discuss their experience recruiting talent international and domestically in both the high tech and skilled trades sectors.

The METs are part of Ontario's Immigration Strategy and feedback from employers have previously led to changes to the immigration system. During this year's series of roundtables, employers provided recommendations to government on the creation of a Business Advisory Service within the Ministry. The OCC has consistently called for a concierge service with respect to improving customer service and we look forward to seeing the results of this year's METs.

Ontario Economic Report Regional Launch Event Series

The OCC, in partnership with the Ontario Chamber Network, hosted 10 regional launch events for the Ontario Economic Report (OER) in the first half of 2017. These events provided a platform to discuss emerging economic issues, highlight vulnerabilities in the Ontario economy, and often included panel and roundtable discussions with local business and political leaders. The goal of this series is to ensure that Chambers are empowered to use the information contained within the OER in their local communities.

Advocacy Day

Building off the success of last year, the OCC held its second annual Advocacy Day at Queen's Park on March 27th, 2017. This full day event is an opportunity for chambers of commerce and boards of trade from around the province to meet with senior government officials about issues that matter to their communities. Across a total of 13 sessions, chamber leaders discussed electricity prices, agri-food, arbitration, labour policy, international trade, and more. Over 100 people from across the province participated in this year's Advocacy Day.

Participants also heard from expert speakers, including a panel of political insiders who provided their insight on the upcoming provincial election and what the chamber network should be considering with respect to their advocacy work. Minister Leal, Minister Del Duca and Minister Thibeault participated in a town hall style Q&A and representatives from all three parties – including Premier Wynne – provided remarks at the closing reception.

Advocacy Day 2017 was also notable for the number of mentions of the OCC and the



Ontario Chamber Network in Question Period. Minister of Economic Development and Growth, Brad Duguid, also welcomed the Network to Queen's Park during the session.

"Let me begin by welcoming the Ontario Chamber of Commerce here to Queen's Park today. I don't know if this government has a partner that we've worked with more closely than our friends at the Ontario Chamber of Commerce."

—Hon. Brad Duguid, Minister of Economic Development and Growth (March 27, 2017)

Annual General Meeting

The Ontario Chamber Network's 2017 Annual General Meeting took place in Sarnia from May 4 to May 7. The theme of the AGM was "It's ON! Driving Prosperity in Ontario." This annual event brings together the entire network to debate policy, hear from political and thought leaders, and learn from the experiences of their Network peers. The AGM is one of the most important initiatives put on by the OCC, as it brings together the entire Network for a series of workshops, panels, and networking events. Most importantly, the resolutions that are put forward by the Network help shape the policy agenda of the OCC and drives our advocacy work.

Economic Leadership Series

In an effort to bring the Ontario Economic Summit (OES) to communities across the province, the OCC developed the Economic Leadership Series (ELS). Through these events, we facilitate the development of regional and sectoral priorities that help inform the OCC's policy work. At an ELS event, leaders from various sectors come together to identify key short, medium and long-term priorities for economic growth. In many cases, the OCC partners with local chambers of commerce and industry groups to deliver the ELS.

These events are supported by the Government of Ontario. If you are interested in holding an ELS in your community, please speak to an OCC staff member.

Ontario Business Achievement Awards

The OCC holds its annual gala, the Ontario Business Achievement Awards (OBAA's), every November. Large and small businesses come together, as finalists, sponsors and supporters, for a night filled of inspiration and celebration. For over 30 years, businesses have been awarded OBAA's for their achievements in sustainability, innovation, skills & training, service excellence, market expansion, and exporting. The event features networking opportunities, entertainment, and great food and drink. We are thrilled to build on the brand for 2017 and are confident this year's awards gala will be better than ever.

Ontario Economic Summit

The 2016 Ontario Economic Summit (OES) examined the innovation ecosystem in Ontario. Leaders from sectors across the province came together to discuss how the business community and the government can work together to improve the regulatory



environment in order to support economic growth in Ontario, develop innovation clusters that support entrepreneurship, and enable Ontario's start-up community to scale into global leaders. Key themes that emerged from this summit were access to talent, disruptive technologies, innovation in the public sector and the Canada-US trade relationship.

The 2017 Ontario Economic Summit will build on last year's summit by diving deeper into Ontario's transition to a disruptive, highly skilled, knowledge-based economy. Investing in innovation is often touted as the key to unlocking future growth potential and maintaining Ontario's competitiveness. However, industry in Ontario has a high perception of risk, while investments in innovation destabilize traditional industries and talent pools. How do we ensure Ontario thrives in the next industrial revolution?

For more information and to stay up-to-date on the development of the program, please visit www.ontarioeconomicssummit.com.



OCC RESOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

The policy resolutions passed by the Ontario Chamber Network represent the cornerstone of the OCC's policy and advocacy work. Each year, we take stock of how the OCC has taken action and seen progress on each resolution.

INFRASTRUCTURE/TRANSPORTATION

● RESOLUTION: INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THE PEACE BRIDGE EXPANSION

- ✓ **Action:** On March 1, the Ontario government launched its *Small Business Innovation Challenge*. Through this initiative, the Province is inviting small- and medium-sized businesses to develop, test and demonstrate innovative solutions to challenges that will enhance government programs and services.

● RESOLUTION: ADDRESSING THE NIAGARA TO GTA TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR

- ✓ **Action:** In a November 2016 consultation with the Minister of Infrastructure, the OCC stressed the importance of investing in trade-enabling infrastructure. This topic will also be highlighted in the 2017 Environment & Infrastructure Policy Program.

● RESOLUTION: BROADER PROVINCIAL TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

- ✓ **Action:** In *Obstacles and Opportunities: The Importance of Small Business in Ontario*, we urged the government to deliver on its infrastructure commitments to support small business growth. The importance of infrastructure investment for economic growth was raised in a November 2016 consultation with the Minister of Infrastructure and will be highlighted in the 2017 Environment & Infrastructure Policy Program.

● RESOLUTION: DEVELOPING A SINGLE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY IN THE GTHA

- ✓ **Action:** This recommendation was highlighted in the *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission* and raised in a November 2016 consultation with the Minister of Infrastructure.

● RESOLUTION: EASTWARD EXTENSION – HIGHWAY 407

- ✓ **Action:** Construction on the East Project has begun and will be completed in 2020.

● RESOLUTION: ENSURING COMPETITIVENESS FOR ONTARIO'S MARINE TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY

- ✓ **Action:** In a November 2016 consultation with the Minister of Infrastructure, the OCC stressed the importance of investing in trade-enabling infrastructure. This topic will also be highlighted in the 2017 Environment & Infrastructure Policy Program.

● RESOLUTION: GOODS AND PEOPLE MOVEMENT LONG-RANGE, MULTIMODAL, INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

- ✓ **Action:** In *Obstacles and Opportunities: The Importance of Small Business in Ontario*, we urged the government to deliver on its infrastructure commitments to

support small business growth. The importance of infrastructure investment for economic growth was raised in a November 2016 consultation with the Minister of Infrastructure and will be highlighted in the 2017 Environment & Infrastructure Policy Program.

● **RESOLUTION: HIGHWAY 6 EXTENSION BETWEEN HIGHWAY 401 AND SOUTH OF MORRISTON**

- ✓ **Action:** A new Highway 6 extension and bypass south of Morriston was announced in 2016.

● **RESOLUTION: MOVING FORWARD ON THE GTA WEST CORRIDOR**

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has conducted outreach with Ministry of Transportation staff.

● **RESOLUTION: REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION FARE INTEGRATION**

- ✓ **Action:** This recommendation (as part of a larger call for a single transit entity) was highlighted in the *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission* and raised in a November 2016 consultation with the Minister of Infrastructure.

● **RESOLUTION: REINSTATE MTO CONNECTING LINK FUNDING**

- ✓ **Action:** The Connecting Links Funding Program was re-instated for 2015, and in the *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission* we called for the program to be enhanced and modernized.

● **RESOLUTION: SUPPORT FOR TRANSCANADA'S ENERGY EAST PROJECT**

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has spoken in favour of this project in a number of forums, both publically and with government.

● **RESOLUTION: BRIDGE THE BROADBAND GAP**

- ✓ **Action:** In July 2016, the OCC issued a letter to the provincial government addressing the issue of inadequate access to broadband in certain communities throughout the province. We called on the government to develop a robust broadband investment strategy which identifies broadband as an infrastructure investment and does not dissuade private sector investment. This issue was addressed most recently in both the 2017 federal and provincial pre-budget submissions.

● **RESOLUTION: ADDRESSING ONTARIO'S INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICIT THROUGH ALTERNATIVE FINANCING AND PROCUREMENT**

- ✓ **Action:** Procurement reform broadly has been one of the advocacy priorities of the OCC. Infrastructure procurement was one of the asks in our *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission*. In 2016 the OCC sent a letter to the Ministers of Health & Long-Term Care, Economic Development & Growth, and Government & Consumer Services in support of the concept of "local knowledge" within the procurement framework. The OCC has also included procurement reform as a cornerstone of the Health Transformation Initiative.

● RESOLUTION: EXPANDING NATURAL GAS SERVICE IN RURAL ONTARIO

- ✓ **Action:** In October 2016, the OCC released *Fertile Ground: Growing the Competitiveness of Ontario's Agri-food Sector*, which addresses the competitiveness of Ontario's agri-food sector. The report recommended that government expedite the expansion and reinforcement of energy assets that would support economic development in the sector. Furthermore, the report urged government to provide program details of its \$230 million commitment to expand natural gas infrastructure to ensure that rural communities remain competitive and viable in terms of energy costs.

● RESOLUTION: MODERNIZING THE CONNECTING LINKS FUNDING PROGRAM

- ✓ **Action:** The Connecting Links Funding Program was re-instated for 2015, and in the *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission* we called for the program to be enhanced and modernized.

● RESOLUTION: BUSINESS REGULATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT – EXPANDING 'OPEN FOR BUSINESS' FOCUS TO MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- ✓ **Action:** In *Obstacles and Opportunities: The Importance of Small Business in Ontario*, we emphasized the need for all levels of government to work together to establish a regulatory 'conceirge service' to assist small businesses in understanding, navigating and achieving compliance with relevant regulatory requirements. The OCC recently reiterated this recommendation in a meeting with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

COMPETITIVENESS

● RESOLUTION: CREATION OF A DEVELOPMENT CHARGE FRAMEWORK

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has conducted outreach on this issue with Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing staff.

● RESOLUTION: IMPLEMENTATION OF A ONE BUSINESS NUMBER

- ✓ **Action:** In *Obstacles and Opportunities: The Importance of Small Business in Ontario*, we emphasized the need for all levels of government to work together to establish a regulatory 'conceirge service' to assist small businesses in understanding, navigating and achieving compliance with relevant regulatory requirements.

● RESOLUTION: INCREASING VALUE AND SPURRING INNOVATION THROUGH PUBLIC SECTOR PROCUREMENT IN TRANSPORTATION

- ✓ **Action:** Procurement reform broadly has been one of the advocacy priorities of the OCC. Infrastructure procurement was one of the asks in our *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission*. In 2016 we sent a letter to the Ministers of Health & Long-Term Care, Economic Development & Growth, and Government & Consumer Services in

support of the concept of “local knowledge” within the procurement framework. The OCC has also included procurement reform as a cornerstone of the Health Transformation Initiative.

● RESOLUTION: PRIORITIZING REGIONAL CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ **Action:** In *Fertile Ground: Growing the Competitiveness of Ontario’s Agri-food Sector*, the OCC highlighted the success and diversity of agri-food and bioeconomy clusters in Ontario. We recommended that government promote meaningful and well-resourced partnerships between industry, academic institutions and government by leveraging existing innovation networks. In *Adopting Our Advantage: Supporting a Thriving Health Science Sector in Ontario*, we supported the growing health and life sciences clusters, and outlined means by which both government and industry could support nascent clusters.

● RESOLUTION: PROMOTING INNOVATION TO IMPROVE COMPETITIVENESS AND PRODUCTIVITY

- ✓ **Action:** Innovation as a means to improve Ontario’s competitiveness and prosperity is a theme in much of the OCC’s work, particularly reports such as *Breaking Barriers: Ontario’s Scale Up Challenge* and the five installments of the Health Transformation Initiative. In addition, the theme of OES 2016 was innovation.

● RESOLUTION: REDUCE THE CUMULATIVE REGULATORY AND COST BURDEN ON ONTARIO EMPLOYERS

- ✓ **Action:** In *Obstacles and Opportunities: The Importance of Small Business in Ontario*, we emphasized the need for all levels of government to work together to establish a regulatory ‘conceirge service’ to assist small businesses in understanding, navigating and achieving compliance with relevant regulatory requirements. Furthermore, we recommended that Ontario work with the federal and municipal governments to establish a publicly available cost-of-doing-business (CODB) in Ontario. This analysis would aggregate all policy-induced input costs (at all three levels of government) and would be updated annually to highlight the cumulative impact of any new government policies implemented in the past year or proposed in the year ahead.

● RESOLUTION: SUPPORT GROWTH WITH EXPANDED BROADBAND ACCESS

- ✓ **Action:** In July 2016, the OCC issued a letter to the provincial government addressing the issue of inadequate access to broadband in certain communities throughout the province. We called on the government to develop a robust broadband investment strategy which identifies broadband as an infrastructure investment and does not dissuade private sector investment. This issue was addressed most recently in both the 2017 federal and provincial pre-budget submissions.

● RESOLUTION: WSIB REFORMS FOR A NEW GENERATION

- ✓ **Action:** In September 2015, the OCC provided a submission to the WSIB’s Preliminary Rate Framework outlining 10 recommendations that the WSIB and the

Government of Ontario should adopt to mitigate the impact of the proposed reforms on the business community. In December 2015, the WSIB released an updated version of the Rate Framework that incorporates a number of recommendations from the OCC, including 6 of the 7 recommendations directed to the WSIB in our September submission.

● RESOLUTION: ELIMINATE INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE BARRIERS BEFORE CETA TAKES EFFECT

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has addressed this issue in *Emerging Stronger*, our federal election materials, and in upcoming 2017 work on trade. In July 2016, the premiers reached an historic agreement on inter-provincial trade.

● RESOLUTION: ACCELERATING GROWTH BY ENHANCING ONTARIO'S TOURISM PRODUCT OFFERING

- ✓ **Action:** In addition to our broad tourism sector work in 2016 and 2017, the OCC will address the link between the craft alcoholic beverage industry in Ontario and tourism in an upcoming letter.

● RESOLUTION: ADVANCE ONTARIO'S BIOECONOMY

- ✓ **Action:** In *Fertile Ground: Growing the Competitiveness of Ontario's Agri-food Sector*, we recommended that Ontario work with the federal government to develop a national bioeconomy strategy.

● RESOLUTION: DRIVE INNOVATION WITH AFFORDABLE ENERGY COSTS

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has been consistently advocating on this issue, in reports such as *Empowering Ontario*, *Obstacles and Opportunities: The Importance of Small Business in Ontario*, and our Long-Term Energy Plan submission. Additionally, we have written letters and held meetings with government representatives to ensure they understand the challenges facing business.

● RESOLUTION: ENERGY AS A DEVELOPMENT TOOL

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has provided solutions and advocacy on this issue as part of *Empowering Ontario* and the Long-Term Energy Plan submission.

● RESOLUTION: FINANCIAL PROTECTION FOR CANADA'S FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE INDUSTRY

- ✓ **Action:** In January, the OCC sent a letter to Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister highlighting the importance of strengthened Canada-U.S. trade and the need to continue to harmonize regulations, including changes that ensure preferential access to PACA.

● RESOLUTION: SUPPORT FOR ONTARIO FOOD PROCESSORS

- ✓ **Action:** In *Fertile Ground: Growing the Competitiveness of Ontario's Agri-food Sector*, we recommended that government establish food and beverage processing as a priority area in the Next Agricultural Policy Framework. In addition, we recommended that a regulatory concierge service be established to assist industry

in understanding, navigating, and achieving compliance with relevant regulatory requirements.

● RESOLUTION: CREATING A COMPETITIVE HIGH SPEED INTERNET POLICY

- ✓ **Action:** In July 2016, the OCC issued a letter to the provincial government addressing the issue of inadequate access to broadband in certain communities throughout the province. We called on the government to develop a robust broadband investment strategy which identifies broadband as an infrastructure investment and does not dissuade private sector investment. This issue was addressed most recently in both the 2017 federal and provincial pre-budget submissions.

● RESOLUTION: IMPROVING THE PROCESS FOR ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS THAT IMPACT BUSINESS

- ✓ **Action:** In *Obstacles and Opportunities: The Importance of Small Business in Ontario*, we recommended that Ontario work with the federal and municipal governments to establish a publicly available cost-of-doing-business in Ontario. This analysis would aggregate all policy-induced input costs (at all three levels of government) and would be updated annually to highlight the cumulative impact of any new government policies implemented in the past year or proposed in the year ahead.

● RESOLUTION: ACCESS TO DEVELOPMENT CHARGE INFORMATION FOR ONTARIO

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC met with staff from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. There had been a review of development charges and it concluded. There is no action plan from government at this time on this issue.

● RESOLUTION: EXPANDING ONTARIO'S EXPORT CAPACITY BY HARMONIZING AGRI-FOOD CROSS-BORDER TRADE REGULATIONS

- ✓ **Action:** In January, the OCC sent a letter to Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister highlighting the importance of strengthened Canada-U.S. trade and the need to continue to harmonize regulations.

● RESOLUTION: MITIGATING THE RISKS OF CAP AND TRADE ON BUSINESS

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has made cap and trade advocacy a priority since 2015, including releasing a report (*Clean Profits: Pricing Carbon and Embracing the Economic Potential of Cap and Trade*), two submissions, two letters, and hosting a symposium on the topic. We will host a second cap and trade event in late 2017.

● RESOLUTION: KEEP ONTARIO COMPETITIVE BY TAKING A MEASURED APPROACH TO CHANGES TO ONTARIO'S LABOUR LAWS

- ✓ **Action:** In October 2016, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce issued a submission to government on behalf of the Keep Ontario Working group of leading employers and sector associations in response to the Changing Workplaces Review. While the group acknowledges that workplaces are changing and that labour and employment legislation should be modernized, they caution that employers and



employees alike cannot risk public policy changes that would place unintended burdens on them. In light of this concern, the group has developed several key policy options in their submission calling for evidence-based workplace modernization, with a particular focus of caution in the following areas: Education and Enforcement, Scheduling Provisions, Labour Certification Rules, Sector Exemptions, Joint/Common Employers, Sectoral Bargaining, and Minimum Standards.

● **RESOLUTION: SUPPORT ONTARIO'S STEEL INDUSTRY AND ITS SUPPLY CHAIN CLUSTERS**

- ✓ **Action:** The Windsor Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, and Sault Ste Marie Chamber of Commerce took the lead and achieved victory after government agreed to conduct a study on steel dumping practices/unfair trade practice.

● **RESOLUTION: REGULATING THE SHARING ECONOMY FOR A COMPETITIVE ONTARIO**

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC will continue our advocacy on policy issues pertaining to the sharing economy with a report to be released in 2017 addressing the impact of disruptive technologies on the labour market. The research will focus on the integration of advanced technologies, new business models and other disruptive change to the labour market into the economy. In addition, the research will identify opportunities to leverage technology to innovate, improve productivity and standards of living.

● **RESOLUTION: INVESTING IN TOURISM PROMOTION**

- ✓ **Action:** In *Closing the Tourism Gap: Creating a Long-Term Advantage for Ontario*, the OCC quantified the impact of Ontario's tourism gap on visitor spending in the province, and provide a set of nine recommendations to government and industry to help close the gap. These recommendations address the need to engage in strategic and evidence-based planning, improve the tourism business environment, enhance visitor access, and support tourism marketing.

● **RESOLUTION: ENSURE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF FARM BUSINESSES IN ONTARIO**

- ✓ **Action:** In *Fertile Ground: Growing the Competitiveness of Ontario's Agri-food Sector*, the OCC urged the federal and provincial governments to ensure that the Next Agricultural Policy Framework better reflects the unique funding needs of agri-food producers and processors throughout the supply chain.

● **RESOLUTION: ENSURE THE TRANS PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP (TPP) CREATES AN EQUITABLE TRADE ENVIRONMENT FOR ONTARIO'S AUTO SECTOR**

- ✓ **Action:** Given the change in trade policy direction indicated by the US, the Trans-Pacific Partnership is no longer a priority.

● RESOLUTION: IDENTIFY THE COST-DRIVERS BEHIND ELECTRICITY PRICES

- ✓ **Action:** The cost-drivers behind electricity prices was a topic addressed in the Long-Term Energy Plan submission, as well as earlier advocacy work on the energy file.

● RESOLUTION: SUPPORTING ONTARIO TO BECOME A LEADER IN GLOBAL MINING INNOVATION

- ✓ **Action:** Supporting mining innovation was a key topic of discussion at our June 2016 mining roundtable in Toronto, which featured remarks from the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. The OCC also presented its policy perspective to mining stakeholders at the 2016 Mining Innovation Summit.

● RESOLUTION: BENDING THE COST CURVE OF ONTARIO'S ELECTRICITY PRICES

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has been consistently advocating on this issue, in reports such as *Empowering Ontario, Obstacles and Opportunities: The Importance of Small Business in Ontario*, and our 2017 long-term energy plan submission. Additionally, we have written letters and held meetings with government representatives to ensure they understand the challenges facing business.

FISCAL/TAXATION

● RESOLUTION: MAINTAINING ONTARIO MINING TAX RATES

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC hosted a mining roundtable in Toronto in 2016, which featured remarks from the Deputy Minister of MNDM. The OCC also presented its policy perspective to mining stakeholders at the 2016 Mining Innovation Summit.

● RESOLUTION: RECONSIDER APPROACH TO ADDRESSING ONTARIO'S RETIREMENT SAVINGS PROBLEM

- ✓ **Action:** In June 2016, Finance Minister Charles Sousa announced that the Government of Ontario would be abandoning the ORPP in favour of an enhanced CPP, avoiding increased regulatory fragmentation and thus administrative burden – avoiding significant consequences for Ontario's business community.

● RESOLUTION: REINSTATE SCHEDULED CORPORATE INCOME TAX RATE REDUCTIONS BY 2017-18

- ✓ **Action:** In *Obstacles and Opportunities: The Importance of Small Business in Ontario*, we recommended that government continue the scheduled Business Education Tax rate reductions.

● RESOLUTION: ENFORCING WAGE RESTRAINTS FOR SENIOR SCHOOL BOARD OFFICERS

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has conducted outreach with Ministry of Education staff.

● RESOLUTION: ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPETITIVENESS FOR ONTARIOBUYS

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has conducted outreach with the submitting chamber, which indicated that Ontariobuys is no longer a part of the broader public sector procurement strategy. Therefore, this sunseting resolution has not been resubmitted.

● RESOLUTION: ESSENTIAL SERVICE DESIGNATION FOR PROVINCIALLY FUNDED TRANSIT SERVICES

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has conducted outreach with Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Labour staff.

● RESOLUTION: FAIR MUNICIPAL TENDERING

- ✓ **Action:** The 2017 Environment & Infrastructure Policy Program will seek to address municipal infrastructure issues, including developing evidence-based planning processes to ensure long-term funding options.

● RESOLUTION: FAIR GOVERNMENT GRANT FUNDING

- ✓ **Action:** The 2017 Environment & Infrastructure Policy Program will seek to address municipal infrastructure issues, including developing evidence-based planning processes to ensure long-term funding options.

● RESOLUTION: LACK OF TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF SCHOOL BOARDS TO THE PROPERTY TAXPAYERS

- ✓ **Action:** In Emerging Stronger 2016, we called for increased openness and transparency across all levels of government. The OCC will further endeavour to address this resolution in the months ahead.

● RESOLUTION: ONTARIO'S DEBT AND DEFICIT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- ✓ **Action:** Issues related to debt and deficit management are regularly raised in our pre-budget submissions. A specific ask related to alternative service delivery was made in the *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission*, and recommendations related to alternative service delivery in the health care system were made in *Prescription for Partnership: How New Models of Collaboration in Health Care Can Make Outcomes a Priority*. We have also conducted outreach with government staff on specific asks contained within this resolution.

● RESOLUTION: STANDARDIZATION OF ELECTRONIC FINANCIAL REPORTING FOR MUNICIPALITIES

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC met with staff from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. They advised that we consult the financial information return, which is a review of municipal financial information that they belief largely reflects the ask in this resolution.

● RESOLUTION: SUSTAINING PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICES BY ELIMINATING THE PUBLIC SECTOR'S "TOTAL COMPENSATION" PREMIUM

- ✓ **Action:** This resolution was included in the *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission*.

PREMIUM

● RESOLUTION: TRANSPARENCY FOR CROWN CORPORATION DIVESTMENT

- ✓ **Action:** This resolution was included in the *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission*.

● RESOLUTION: USING THE PRIVATE AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTORS TO DELIVER PUBLIC SERVICES

- ✓ **Action:** A specific ask related to alternative service delivery was made in the *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission*, and recommendations related to alternative service delivery in the health care system were made in *Prescription for Partnership: How New Models of Collaboration in Health Care Can Make Outcomes a Priority*.

● RESOLUTION: EDUCATING ONTARIO BUSINESSES AND ESTABLISHING AN OFFSET STRATEGY FOR THE ORPP

- ✓ **Action:** In June 2016, Finance Minister Charles Sousa announced that the Government of Ontario would be abandoning the ORPP in favour of an enhanced CPP, avoiding increased regulatory fragmentation and thus administrative burden – avoiding significant consequences for Ontario's business community.

● RESOLUTION: GETTING ONTARIO BACK TO FISCAL BALANCE

- ✓ **Action:** This resolution was included as our number one pillar in the *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission*.

● RESOLUTION: STRENGTHENING AND MODERNIZING WORKPLACE DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLANS

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC crafted a submission to the Review of Ontario's Solvency Funding Framework for Defined Benefit Pension Plans which supporting changes to solvency rules that would enhance affordability and reduce competitiveness concerns of the business community.

● RESOLUTION: CREATING PAN-CANADIAN TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

- ✓ **Action:** In the 2017 Skills & Workforce Development Policy Program, we will address the regulatory and financial barriers that are closing the skilled trades sector to new workers.



SKILLS

● RESOLUTION: ENGAGING MATURE (45+) DISPLACED WORKERS

- ✓ **Action:** In the 2017 Skills & Workforce Development Policy Program, we will address the regulatory and financial barriers that are closing the skilled trades sector to new workers. Specifically, in a crossover event with our Health Transformation Policy Program, we will convene a multi-ministry roundtable to discuss how Ontario's changing demographics are influencing how government incentivizes economic activity and assigns spending.

● RESOLUTION: EFFECTIVELY INTEGRATING SKILLED IMMIGRANTS INTO THE ONTARIO WORKFORCE

- ✓ **Action:** In *Passport to Prosperity: Ontario's Priorities for Immigration Reform*, we outlined a series of recommendations designed to improve the labour market integration of newcomers to Ontario.

● RESOLUTION: ENSURE POST-SECONDARY GRADUATES IN APPLIED PROGRAMS OF STUDY AT ONTARIO COLLEGES HAVE CREDENTIALS THAT RECOGNIZE THEIR WORLD-LEADING COMPETENCIES

- ✓ **Action:** In the 2017 Skills & Workforce Development Policy Program, we will consider the preparedness of youth as they enter the labour market.

● RESOLUTION: FACILITATING EMPLOYERS' ROLE IN IMMIGRATION IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

- ✓ **Action:** In *Passport to Prosperity: Ontario's Priorities for Immigration Reform*, we outlined a series of recommendations to address barriers to opportunity within the selection system including a recommendation to remove the Labour Market Impact Assessment from the Express Entry system (formerly the Expression of Interest Program).

● RESOLUTION: GOOD GOVERNANCE AT THE COLLEGE OF TRADES

- ✓ **Action:** In the 2017 Skills & Workforce Development Policy Program, we will address the regulatory and financial barriers that are closing the skilled trades sector to new workers. This will include consideration of the role of the Ontario Colleges of Trades.

● RESOLUTION: REFORMING THE COLLEGE OF TRADES

- ✓ **Action:** In the 2017 Skills & Workforce Development Policy Program, we will address the regulatory and financial barriers that are closing the skilled trades sector to new workers. This will include consideration of the role of the Ontario Colleges of Trades.

● RESOLUTION: SMALL BUSINESS ACCESS TO STUDENT LOANS

- ✓ **Action:** This resolution was included in the *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission*.

● RESOLUTION: STRENGTHENING LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION FOR BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS

- ✓ **Action:** In *Reform that Works: A Call for Evidence-Based Workplace Law Modernization in Ontario*, we emphasized the need for data, including LMI, to drive decision-making. The OCC is also partnering with research firms in the 2017 Skills & Workforce Development Policy Program in order to uncover improved labour market data and share it with our members.

● RESOLUTION: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN ONTARIO AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING

- ✓ **Action:** In *Fertile Ground: Growing the Competitiveness of Ontario's Agri-food Sector*, the OCC outlined a series of recommendations to address the skills gap in the agri-food sector. We urged government to work with industry and the post-secondary sector to ensure that program offerings remain responsive to the needs of agricultural producers and processors.

● RESOLUTION: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

- ✓ **Action:** In *Fertile Ground: Growing the Competitiveness of Ontario's Agri-food Sector*, the OCC outlined a series of recommendations to address the skills gap in the agri-food sector. We urged government to work with industry and the post-secondary sector to ensure that program offerings remain responsive to the needs of agricultural producers and processors.

● RESOLUTION: ADDRESS THE GROWING LABOUR FORCE DISCONNECT BY CREATING A STRONGER BUSINESS/COMMERCE CURRICULUM

- ✓ **Action:** The need to build a stronger business/commerce curriculum in Ontario schools that emphasized financial literacy was delivered during our advocacy campaign on the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP). Throughout the campaign, the OCC highlighted the positive benefits that increased financial literacy can have on individual saving behavior and urged the Ontario government to take steps to formally build financial literacy programming in the Ontario school curriculum. As of 2017, the government is piloting a financial literacy course in 28 schools, with the aim of incorporating it into the full curriculum of all schools in 2018. In addition, the OCC is supporting the Funny Money High School Assembly Program, a comedy show that teaches financial literacy at 400 schools.

● RESOLUTION: IMPROVE WORKFORCE COMPETITIVENESS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES AND SMALL URBAN CENTRES BY CREATING A FLEXIBLE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

- ✓ **Action:** In the 2017 Skills & Workforce Development Policy Program, we will address the regulatory and financial barriers that are closing the skilled trades sector to new workers.

● RESOLUTION: MOVING THE ONTARIO COLLEGES OF TRADES FROM REGULATOR TO PROMOTER

- ✓ **Action:** In the 2017 Skills & Workforce Development Policy Program, we will address the regulatory and financial barriers that are closing the skilled trades sector to new workers. This will include consideration of the role of the Ontario Colleges of Trades.

● RESOLUTION: ADDRESSING LOCAL LABOUR MARKET NEEDS THROUGH THE ONTARIO PROVINCIAL NOMINEE PROGRAM

- ✓ **Action:** In *Passport to Prosperity: Ontario's Priorities for Immigration Reform*, we urged government to leverage the Municipal Immigration Information Online Program to Develop a coordinated outreach strategy to retain immigrants in rural and northern communities.

OTHER ISSUES

● RESOLUTION: IMPROVING PROVINCIAL PAYMENT TIMES

- ✓ **Action:** The *Small Business Too Big To Ignore* campaign was a platform in which the Network raised this issue.

● RESOLUTION: PERSONAL REAL ESTATE CORPORATIONS

- ✓ **Action:** This resolution was included in the *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission*.

● RESOLUTION: PROMOTING GREATER TRANSPARENCY IN THE 'OPEN FOR BUSINESS' INITIATIVE

- ✓ **Action:** In *Fertile Ground: Growing the Competitiveness of Ontario's Agri-food Sector*, we urged government to publicly release economic impact assessments that could affect the agri-food sector to ensure decision-making is evidence-based, participatory, unbiased and transparent. In that report, as well as *Obstacles and Opportunities: The Importance of Small Business in Ontario*, we recommended that all levels of government establish a regulatory 'concierge service' to assist small businesses in understanding, navigating, and achieving compliance with relevant regulatory requirements.

● RESOLUTION: PROMOTING DISTRICT ENERGY PROGRAMS

- ✓ **Action:** Ontario Power Authority is no longer in existence.

● RESOLUTION: SUPPORT THE PROPOSED GREAT LAKES PROTECTION ACT AND MONITOR TO ENSURE TIMELY CREATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSERVATION AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS

- ✓ **Action:** OCC will continue to ensure that the Great Lakes Guardian Council considers the interests and perspectives of Ontario business.

● RESOLUTION: CANADIAN NUCLEAR INNOVATION

- ✓ **Action:** This issue was raised in the *2017 Federal Pre-Budget Submission* and in a letter to the federal Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development.

● RESOLUTION: FINDING BALANCE IN THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has conducted outreach with Ministry of Natural Resources staff.

● RESOLUTION: INNOVATION IN HUMAN SERVICES: COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has engaged in outreach with the submitting Chamber, which indicated that they no longer have an interest to pursue further action on this resolution. Therefore, this sunseting resolution has not been resubmitted.

● RESOLUTION: ONTARIO'S RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has conducted outreach with Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing staff.

● RESOLUTION: PROMOTING HEALTHY WORKPLACES IN ONTARIO

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC demonstrated leadership on this issue via a major event during Mental Health Week 2017, and will follow up with a report on the business case for mental wellness in the workplace.

● RESOLUTION: PROVINCE OF ONTARIO WIDE LOAD PERMIT

- ✓ **Action:** In August 2016, the Ministry of Transportation acknowledged these challenges and began a process to change the administration of provincial oversize/overweight (O/O) permits. The changes to the permitting process will help improve the turnaround time for companies to obtain permits, improve business efficiency, speed up time to complete construction projects and create greater value for taxpayers.

● RESOLUTION: UNREALIZED "HEADS AND BEDS LEVY" HURTS ONTARIO'S ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

- ✓ **Action:** This resolution was addressed in the *2017 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission*.

● RESOLUTION: WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC demonstrated leadership on this issue via a major event during Mental Health Week 2017, and will follow up with a report on the business case for mental wellness in the workplace.

● RESOLUTION: YEAR ROUND GREENHOUSE GROWING OPERATIONS

- ✓ **Action:** The unique concerns of the greenhouse sector, particularly those pertaining to energy prices, were highlighted in the October 2016 OCC report, *Fertile Ground: Growing the Competitiveness of Ontario's Agri-food Sector*, which noted that the

competitiveness of this sector in Ontario is compromised by high energy and electricity prices. The report urged government to expedite the expansion and reinforcement of energy assets that will support economic development of the agri-food sector.

● **RESOLUTION: BANNING WEEKEND UNION DRIVES**

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has conducted outreach with Ministry of Labour staff.

● **RESOLUTION: ESTABLISHING A COST-EFFECTIVE DRUG DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM**

- ✓ **Action:** This issue was addressed in *Care in Our Control: Managing Innovation in Ontario's Multi-Payer Health Care System*.

● **RESOLUTION: FIXING THE ARBITRATION SYSTEM FOR FIRE AND POLICE SERVICES IN ONTARIO**

- ✓ **Action:** In February 2017, the OCC released an open letter to the Premier addressing deficiencies in the provincial interest arbitration system. We also met with Ministry of Labour staff during Advocacy Day to discuss interest arbitration, as well as met with staff from the Premier's office.

● **RESOLUTION: MAXIMIZE THE ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA IN ONTARIO**

- ✓ **Action:** In September 2016, the OCC released an open letter to the Premier calling on the Province to immediately begin a robust consultation process aimed at developing a regulatory framework for the distribution of recreational marijuana.

● **RESOLUTION: SUPPORT PROVINCIAL JURISDICTION IN AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has conducted outreach with Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change staff.

● **RESOLUTION: ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF HEALTH CARE IN RURAL AND NORTHERN ONTARIO**

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC hosted an Economic Leadership Series session in Sault Ste. Marie on this issue, as well as addressed it in *Adopting our Advantage: Supporting a Thriving Health Science Sector in Ontario*.



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