



**Halifax Chamber's 2019 Federal Budget Response  
March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Like many of you on Tuesday evening, I tried to watch the budget speech. Instead, I read it. While this was, for me, an unusual method of first glance at what's coming for the new fiscal year, I was able to conclude, like many other Canadian Chambers that the budget failed to address multiple issues that impact a business' ability to create jobs and add to our economy growth. We agree with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce\* that the Budget did not address or provide solutions to many of the top issues facing Canadian businesses, including:

- A commitment to a comprehensive review of the taxation system to make it fair and less cumbersome for businesses.
- A broad-based commitment to reduce the regulatory burden on businesses.
- A renewed commitment to eliminating inter-provincial trade barriers.
- Support for SMEs to help them find new export opportunities and expand Canada's ability to diversify its trade.
- There were some areas of the budget that showed progress for our business community, including our youth who will be joining our labour pool and our rural small business communities.

Along with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce\*, we were pleased to see the budget discussions in the following areas:

- Multiple funding mechanisms to ensure that high-speed internet access is Canada-wide by 2030, with \$1.7 billion specifically earmarked for rural, remote and Northern communities.
- \$631.2 million to expand Work-Integrated-Learning (WIL) programs, with a view to create up to 20,000 new WIL opportunities outside of STEM-related fields.
- \$150 million to create new partnerships between government and industry to create up to 20,000 new WIL opportunities.
- Multiple funding mechanisms to enhance apprentice programs in skilled trades.

The Chamber is always very direct in its quest for balanced budgets. We are pleased to see that the Federal deficit is in decline as is the federal Debt-to-GDP ratio, but would like to see a plan of action for future balanced budgets. The Halifax Chamber remains committed to our advocacy efforts and will push for what's best for our members and for the ability of the private sector to lead in the growth of our skilled labour pool, innovative designs and economic prosperity.

\*View the full Canadian Chamber of Commerce's release here: <http://www.chamber.ca/media/news-releases/190319-budget-2019/>