

CALL TO ACTION

NS Debt Has Risen \$18.7 Million Since Alarm Sounded!

March 6, 2000

On February 22, a Call to Action was issued to all Chamber members to sound the alarm on Nova Scotia's fiscal crisis.

The message sent to members and all concerned Nova Scotians was simple: the only action which can protect health care and education is to cut government spending, bring our budget to a surplus, and begin to pay down the debt. The message to government is: act now; don't raise taxes; and, spend less, smarter.

The Chamber's message has gained the attention of the Nova Scotia media. In addition to the coverage the Feb. 22 announcement generated, it has been discussed by prominent print media columnists, including Ralph Surette, Marilla Stephenson and John McLeod, and been the subject of an editorial in *The Chronicle Herald* and *The Mail Star*.

In the last 10 days, Chamber President Murray Coolican has "raised the alarm" on CBC Radio's *Information Morning*, CBC-TV's *First Edition*, ATV's *Live at Five*, and CJCH's *Hotline*.

In the Call to Action, the Chamber asked you to take action by contacting the Premier, the Minister of Finance, their Cabinet colleagues, and your local MLA to express your support for immediate action to reduce spending, refocus government on essential services and avoid tax increases.

As part of this initiative, the Chamber launched a policy action page on our website that, with the latest technology and a few mouseclicks, sends your personal message to the Premier and others in government.

Numerous members and concerned citizens have sent the letter posted on our website, or their own personal message, to the Premier and Finance Minister.

Here is a sample of what some of you have told Premier Hamm and other elected representatives so far:

"I am writing to encourage you to do what's right instead of what's easy. Disaster is the in-

evitable result of continuing to spend what we don't have."

"Raising taxes is not the answer -- Nova Scotia is already at uncompetitive levels versus other jurisdictions. Further increases are bound to discourage businesses from establishing themselves or growing within the province."

"Please stop handing out grants and cheap loans to businesses in the name of job creation."

"If you are interested in keeping hard-working, successful businesses like mine here in Nova Scotia, DO NOT LOOK TO INCREASING TAXES. If you cannot, or will not, get your spending in order, you will be forced into bankruptcy when businesses like mine pull up stakes and head south."

"It is time to take tough decisions. We will all be indebted to you in the long-term for the decisions you take today."

Nova Scotia's debt is increasing at the rate of \$1,000 per minute. Since you received the first Call to Action, our debt has grown by another \$18.7 million.

The alarm must continue to sound and your voice must be heard at Province House. Our elected representatives, whether in government or in opposition, must show strong leadership to secure our financial future.

If you haven't already, take action now by visiting the policy action page on our website at www.halifaxchamber.com/action/index.cfm and encourage your clients and colleagues to do the same. Let the Premier and all MLA's know that the time to act is now.

For further information on the Chamber's position on restructuring the provincial government, please contact Nancy Conrad or Charles Cirtwill at the Chamber office at 468-7111 or info@halifaxchamber.com.

Thank you for your support. Together, we make a difference.



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