

83% of Chamber Members Endorse Sunday Openings

April 3, 2000

An overwhelming majority (83%) of the 367 respondents to the Chamber's February 28 member poll on general Sunday openings are calling for the deregulation of store hours. This represents a significant shift from the Chamber's last poll in October 1997 when just one half of respondents said government should not regulate store hours.

Another significant change is that over two thirds (68%) of retail respondents support deregulation. In 1997, the response was reversed — with 60% of retail members opposing deregulation.

The Chamber poll shows that support for deregulation now extends across all segments of the organization's membership. The majority of respondents from hotel and tourism operators (97%), service firms (83%), wholesalers and manufacturers (79%), large retailers (77%) and independent retailers (55%) endorsed general Sunday openings.

Chamber members say they see a number of benefits for Nova Scotia:

- 1) A reduction in needless government regulation.
- 2) A means to meet the needs of customers while giving business more control on their operations and their bottom line.
- 3) Opportunities to draw in new tourist dollars.
- 4) New avenues for students who are looking for work.

5) Increased family time and reduced stress as people balance their weekends and maximize their productive time with family and friends.

The message from this poll is clear -- the business community supports deregulation as an opportunity to manage their businesses more effectively. Deregulation will let business, not the government, decide how to control costs and meet the needs of customers.

Deregulation is not about forcing businesses to be open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

The wide range of store hours in Metro is a clear example of how the business community will balance cost with demand to make competitive choices about when to open. Some downtown malls close on Monday and Tuesday nights, other malls closer to the suburban fringe stay open until 9:30 or 10:00 pm.

This same flexibility is found in deregulated jurisdictions. In Newfoundland, for example, some retail sectors do not open at all on Sundays, while others only do so in the months leading up to Christmas.

Nova Scotians want it, visitors to our province want it, it is a good thing for the business community -- the Chamber says now is the time to deregulate store hours.

Editor's note: We thank you for your high rate of response to this survey. The Chamber will be working to press government to deregulate store hours as soon as possible.

POLICY UPDATE



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