



# POLICYUPDATE

News and views from the Metropolitan Halifax Chamber of Commerce December 12, 1997

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The Chamber believes that it is in the interest of both the federal government and our local community to see a strong regional economy that is a net contributor to the overall economic benefit of our nation. Both the Port and Airport are critical to Nova Scotia's future as the two combined employ approximately 14,000 people.

The Chamber stressed to the Minister the need for action on the future of these economic engines — action that will make our region less dependent on federal transfers, and better prepare us to take maximum advantage of local opportunities.

The meeting with Minister Collenette was an excellent opportunity for the Chamber to speak on behalf of the local business community.

The Port and Airport are vital to Metro Halifax's economy. As the *voice of business*, the Chamber's objective is to ensure the growth and viability of both, and boost economic prosperity for our members and the region as a whole.

It is the Chamber's objective to work in partnership with the Minister to support local Port and Airport Authorities which can effectively and efficiently manage the day-to-day operations of these facilities.

The Port of Halifax contributes over \$300 million annually to the local economy. In transferring management of the Port to the private sector, the Minister must have the support of the community. The terms of any agreement must be fair and reasonable.

The new Port Authority must be able to attract investment — with comfort for investors — by minimizing the risks associated with investing in what has been traditionally a government domain, and increasing the chances of a valuable return.

The Airport is also a significant economic contributor to the Metro Halifax economy. It is essential that the HIA have comparable facilities to similar airports like those in Ottawa and Winnipeg.

Facilities which can support both current demand and future growth are needed. Like the Port, in order to grow, the local Airport Authority must be able to secure private sector funding and investment over the long-term.

Mark, Mary and Valerie met in Ottawa with Minister Collenette, along with his Director General of Airport Programs and Divestiture, and the Director General of Marine Policy and Programs. "We had a good frank discussion of the issues," said Chamber President Mark Richardson. "We are satisfied that a number of concerns we have are being addressed, and we hope we have influenced the Minister as he moves forward with the remaining issues."

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**METROPOLITAN HALIFAX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

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