



PRESS RELEASE

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CHAMBER URGES GOVERNMENT TO DO MORE TO CONTROL SPENDING, LOWER TAXES

April 9, 2015 - Halifax, NS – The Nova Scotia government’s 2015-16 budget is by no means a radical departure from the status quo in our province, despite some signs of progress.

“The budget doesn’t go far enough to control spending or put Nova Scotia on a clear path to meaningful tax relief,” said Rob Batherson, incoming Chair of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce. “While there are some positive aspects in the budget, we strongly urge the government to do more to ensure responsible spending, surplus budgets, lower taxes and less debt.”

The government is projecting a deficit of \$97.6 million this year, with a target to balance the budget by 2016 – a year later than suggested in the Chamber’s pre-budget submission. The Chamber is also disappointed that the government did not adopt the Broten Report’s recommendation for a five year spending freeze. The Chamber recognizes that progress has been made to hold program spending to a 0.7% increase, but strongly believes that more needs to be done. Managing public sector wage growth will play a major part in determining the success of the government’s financial plan.

“Chamber members value good public services and the professionals that provide them, but the best way to protect those services is to actually have the tax dollars to pay for them, instead of continuing to live on borrowed money, as this year’s budget will still do,” added Batherson.

The Chamber also feels that there needs to be a clearer direction on tax relief for people and businesses. The Chamber acknowledged the government’s budget commitment to establish a tax reform working-group, as suggested in both the Broten report and the Chamber’s pre-budget submission.

“Reducing the tax burden is a major part of the Chamber’s 2013-2018 Strategic Plan and we will continue to advocate for tax relief,” noted Batherson. “With Nova Scotians paying some of the highest personal and business taxes in Canada – and paying the price of those taxes through the worst economic growth over the past two decades – we can’t lose sight of the importance of lower taxes to get our economy growing and create jobs.”

The Chamber appreciates the government’s efforts of reducing the regulatory burden with the creation of the new Department of Business. Championing common sense regulations is another strategic plan priority of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, as it pursues its goal to see Halifax become one of Canada’s top three economic growth cities by 2018.

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