



HALIFAX CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

**2007 ISSUES BRIEFING NOTE
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT**

June 2007

**ISSUES BRIEFING NOTE
JUNE 2007**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This note outlines key Chamber advocacy areas that are provincial in scope. Given the Chamber's role in monitoring and promoting Halifax's economic strategy, our advocacy issues have been organized to be consistent with the strategy's main goals. These are:

- supercharging our labour force,
- leveraging our creative community,
- creating a gung-ho business climate,
- capitalizing on our reputation, and
- converting rivalries into partnerships.

In support of this, this note outlines key facts on some of the challenges facing businesses and the province generally in the areas of education, skills, health, immigration, defence, development, taxes, regulation, energy, government fiscal responsibility, government assistance to business, branding, transportation and consultation. It also summarizes Chamber positions, actions and recommendations for actions in these areas. More comprehensive information on the Chamber's position on many of these topic areas can be found in Chamber policy papers.

If there can be said to be one recurring theme in the note – it is that of people. Actions such as making our existing population more productive through education, training and health promotion initiatives or attracting more newcomers to Nova Scotia obviously relate directly to this theme. But the theme of people goes beyond traditional labour force issues – in fact all the actions of the economic strategy can be viewed as people centric. Actions relating to streamlining regulation and competitive taxes, actions relating to vibrant cities, and actions relating to excellent transportation systems, are actions that will create the great opportunities, the conditions for success and the vibrancy that will help us find, attract and keep the best people for Halifax and Nova Scotia.

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INTRODUCTION

The Halifax Chamber of Commerce is a best practice business advocacy organization that strives to make Halifax an even better place to live, work and play. It is the oldest Chamber in North America with roots dating to 1750 and was the first Chamber in North America to become ISO certified. The Chamber is an active voice for business at the federal, provincial and municipal level.

Because the Chamber has primary responsibility for monitoring the progress of Halifax’s economic strategy and because we believe this strategy is an excellent roadmap to economic vitality we have organized our priorities in relation to the goals and strategies of the economic strategy. The implementation of this economic strategy, which requires the collaboration of many partners, is a prime opportunity to collaborate to the benefit not only of Halifax but the entire province:

- Halifax’s economic strategy complements well the province’s economic strategy, “Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity”,
- many of the actions taken under the strategy will necessarily benefit businesses in all parts of the province, and
- finally, the success of the strategy and the economic success of Halifax translate into economic benefit for the rest of the province as well.¹

It is essential that all those with responsibility for delivering the strategy work aggressively towards strategy implementation and success. 2010 – the target date for the strategy goals – is sooner than we might think and if we allow ourselves to be complacent we will surely fall short of our goals.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY GOALS	CHAMBER PRIORITY
SUPERCHARGE OUR LABOUR FORCE	
By 2010, HRM’s bustling job market will compel our young and ambitious to stay and make our community a magnet for highly trained immigrants and expatriates.	EDUCATION <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 40% of the working-age population of the province has prose literacy proficiency below the level considered to be the minimum level for coping with the demands of the knowledge society and information economy.²• Half Nova Scotia’s workforce has a numeracy level below that considered to be the minimum level for coping in today’s economy.³

¹ See for example, Conference Board of Canada “Canada’s Hub Cities a Driving Force of the National Economy”. July 2006.

² Brink, Satya. Literacy in Nova Scotia Implications of Findings from IALSS 2003. HRSDC – Learning Policy Directorate. January 2006. Accessed on-line via www.nald.ca.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At 62.8%, the province's participation rate is significantly lower than the national average of 67.2%.⁴• The ratio of those under 15 and over 65 to the working age population is growing and expected to grow even more dramatically – hitting 62.3% by 2026.⁵ <p>At the request of its members the Chamber struck a task force to assess what role, if any, the Chamber should play in education. The task force, led by Allan Shaw, recommended that the Chamber establish a standing committee on education and training. It recognized the urgent nature of the issues identified above and advocated that the Chamber make education and training a priority for at least five years. Both these recommendations were accepted by the Chamber's board of directors. A standing committee has now been established, headed by Cheryl Hodder, a partner with McInnes Cooper.</p> <p>SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 51% of respondents to the Chamber's 2006 member issues survey indicated their company is experiencing an inadequate number of candidates with the requisite skills. <p>Together with education, the skills agenda is an important one for the Chamber and its members. Whether the challenge is ensuring the right match of skills training to employer needs, helping employers identify the skills they need in their employees or helping new entrants to the labour force find their business match, the skills agenda is top of mind for many.</p> <p>In many ways, in our province, the solutions to the skills challenges lie within us. For example, as noted above, the participation rate in Nova Scotia is significantly lower than the Canadian average. We must find ways of tapping into underemployed sources of labour – this may mean assessing skills by enticing retirees back into the workforce. The Chamber's efforts in this area will be</p>
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³ Ibid.

⁴ Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey – Catalogue no. 70-001-XIE.

⁵ 2006 dependency ratio NS – 43.4, 2016 - 48.5, 62.3. Source: Statistics Canada, Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories. Catalogue no. 91-520-XIE. December 2005.

	<p>coordinated with its education work.</p> <p>HEALTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nova Scotia has the highest rates of cancer, asthma, & arthritis, and the second highest rate of high blood pressure in the country.• Lost days due to illness and disability translate into over \$1 billion a year in lost productivity in Nova Scotia.• Health care costs are increasing at about 7% annually while revenues grow between 3 & 4%.• Expenditures on health currently represent over 46% of program expenses.⁶• If we do nothing, within 20 years 80% of the province's budget will be spent on health care. <p>We recognize and underscore the importance of working together on the underlying problems that are placing a heavy burden on our health care system, at the same time as we seek to improve the efficiency of the health care system itself and curb health care spending.</p> <p>Given the above challenges and others such as the challenge of providing timely health services to all parts of the province and the on-going labour shortage of health care professionals, the Province should engage in an open discussion with Nova Scotians about other methods of health care service delivery and the additional costs that an ageing population will place on the budget.</p> <p>The Chamber is actively promoting the importance of having a healthy workplace with our members and we are tracking their progress with healthy workplace programs. This is a message we will continue to promote to our members.</p> <p>Measures we would like to see taken by government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reduce health care spending as a percentage of total program spending to the national average within 5 years,• have a single, integrated long term plan that speaks to the sustainability of the health care system and addresses human and capital resource
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⁶ Source: Nova Scotia Budget: Assumptions and Schedules for the Fiscal Year 2007-2008.
http://www.gov.ns.ca/finance/budget07/pdfs/assumptions2007_screen.pdf

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">requirements and integrated information systems, and• establish tax credits making reasonable amounts spent on elements of workplace wellness initiatives a non-taxable benefit. <p>Ultimately, individuals must take responsibility for their own health – we challenge all Nova Scotians to increase physical activity, follow Canada’s food guide, and initiate healthy workplace programs at their work.</p> <p>The following are targets that as a province we should be working towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• decrease revenue lost due to productivity loss in NS by 2.5% per year,• decrease the rate of physical inactivity in NS to the Canadian average within two years,• reduce the rate of obesity to the national average within 5 years, and• reduce the rate of smoking to 15% within 5 years. <p>IMMIGRATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2006 saw an increase in the number of immigrants to the province of 491 persons – to 2199.⁷• The target for our provincial strategy is 3600 immigrants annually.• Preliminary estimates for the number of immigrants to Halifax in 2006 stand at 1888.⁸• Halifax’s economic strategy goal is 2800, which we hope to reach by 2009. <p>The Office of Immigration with its introduction of new streams in the provincial nominee program has made a material difference in attracting immigrants to Nova Scotia. Specifically the family business stream and the international student stream more easily allow immigrants who have ties to Nova Scotia to move or stay here. We must continue to make it easier to immigrate to Nova Scotia.</p> <p>The Chamber recognizes that attraction is just one side of the immigration coin. The other is retention. One of the primary keys to retention is having a job appropriate to one’s skill level and qualifications. And, where immigration is not</p>
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⁷ Nova Scotia department of Finance Statistics.

⁸ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Facts and Figures 2006. Accessed at http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pub/facts2006/facts2006_provinces.html

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	<p>driven by employment, we know immigrants have a harder time than native-born Canadians to find the right job. Excellent work has been underway in the province and is moving along well on the credentialing of internationally educated professionals. More work remains to be done in this area and we recognize that business bears much of the responsibility to integrate immigrants into the workforce. We know that some businesspeople have not yet realized the potential of immigrants and do not fully appreciate the contribution they can make. The Chamber recognises that we have a role to play to educate our members on the ease and benefits of hiring newcomers. Bridging programs, as suggested in the Chamber's 2004 policy on immigration, are a low risk way for employers to take the first steps towards hiring a newcomer. As a Chamber we continue to promote the benefits of immigration to our members through vehicles such as Business Voice magazine, our electronic mail outs and workshops and other events on immigration.</p>
	<p>DEFENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 1991 employment the Department of National Defence employed 13,400 persons in Halifax.• Today that number stands at approximately 10,000. <p>In addition to a significant role in our economy and the local business community. The Canadian Forces, in particular the Navy, has a great historical, social and cultural impact in our community. The Chamber is committed to working with the Forces to facilitate their needs and community integration. As in years past we will work to promote the forces with events and profile via printed and other materials and will continue to have representation from the forces on our board of directors.</p>

LEVERAGE OUR CREATIVE COMMUNITY	
<p>By 2010 HRM's investments in social and cultural infrastructure will enhance the city's persona as one of the most vibrant and unique communities on the continent.</p>	<p>VIBRANT DOWNTOWN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 70% of visitors who visit Nova Scotia from outside the province come to Halifax. • Most tourism activity in Halifax occurs in the Capital District. • About 70% of tourism spending in Halifax is by Nova Scotians from outside the city. • The downtown is important to more than its residents and to more than the residents of Halifax – it is Nova Scotia's capital district. • The population of peninsular Halifax has declined since the 1960s and has continued its decline in recent years.⁹ • There is a perception that Halifax's downtown is a downtown in decline. <p>Halifax's downtown belongs to the entire province – as a capital district we must ensure the city is safe, clean and vibrant. The Chamber's Regional Planning submission recommended that the plan lay out steps to create a strong urban core. One thing in particular that will strengthen the urban core is increasing commercial and residential density downtown. The benefits of greater density in the urban core and, in fact, of all development that allows people to live near where they work, learn and play, also extend to reduced costs for a wide range of services, from transportation to wastewater treatment to energy.</p>
CREATE A GUNG-HO BUSINESS CLIMATE	
<p>By 2010, HRM will possess the best business climate in Canada, one able to kick-start and grow ambitious new enterprises and attract exciting companies from anywhere on the globe.</p>	<p>TAX</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the last iteration of Nova Scotia's business climate index our province was in 9th place on personal income tax and 4th in terms of corporate income tax. • A simple comparison with New Brunswick shows the following: Corporate:

⁹ Population by Polling District, Halifax Regional Municipality. Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population. Accessed on-line: <http://www.halifax.ca/municipalclerk/documents/2001-2006populationbydist.pdf>

- NB high rate - 13%, low rate - 5%
- NS high rate - 16%, low rate - 5%

The Large Corporation Capital Tax:

- NB 0.1% in 2008, to be eliminated in 2009
 - NS 0.2% in 2008, to be eliminated in 2012
- Average taxes in Nova Scotia are at best mid-range compared to the other provinces and most frequently are third highest for given levels of income.¹⁰

The province's consideration of tax reform is an initiative of which the Chamber is strongly supportive. Reducing taxes and more generally improving our tax system makes us more competitive by curbing costs for businesses and improving the perception of business climate in Halifax and our province.

To improve competitiveness and productivity we recommend the province raise the provincial component of the scientific research and development tax credit from 15% to 40% and eliminate sooner the large corporation capital tax.

The Chamber is very concerned about the impact of recent changes to the capped assessment program linking the cap to CPI. We are concerned that linking the prescribed percentage of the CAP has the potential to further increase reliance on the commercial sector for taxes. By limiting the increase of residential assessments while commercial assessments continue to rise with the market, we are concerned that even if the municipality leaves commercial tax rates stable, the relative tax burden on the commercial sector will rise further. We are also concerned about the potential distortionary effect on the market and on individuals' tax bills. That new homebuyers may see dramatically higher tax bills than their older counterparts, we would anticipate having a dampening effect on the market. In addition the economic health of our province in the years to come will be closely tied to our ability to attract and retain young people - policies that discourage new homebuyers will surely impede our ability to do this. While this change may have been meant to control municipal spending, our analysis shows that in fact, particularly when viewed on a per dwelling unit basis, HRM's spending levels have been relatively flat. Far better we believe, is to support HRM in its efforts to levy and collect taxes in a

¹⁰ Source: www.taxtips.ca Comparison tables of marginal and average taxes and tax rates.

fair and equitable manner. As you may be aware, HRM is undertaking a tax reform exercise. The Chamber is very pleased that we are taking a serious look at how taxes are collected at the municipal level and ask for your support as this important initiative progresses.

REGULATION

- Regulation a top priority for Chamber members.¹¹
- Regulatory compliance costs Canadian business \$33 billion per year.¹²

We urge you to consider carefully the economic and business impacts of all new regulations. The Chamber recognizes that in some cases regulation is a necessary and appropriate tool with which to govern the actions of business. However, all regulation has associated costs which may have significant implications for the competitiveness of our businesses. Gas regulation is but one example of an inappropriate, costly and unnecessary intrusion of the government into the private sector. When seeking solutions to perceived challenges we urge you to consider regulation only when alternatives have been thoroughly explored, when the impacts of such regulation have been understood and considered and when potentially affected businesses have been consulted. Where regulation is necessary we urge the government to make processes as streamlined, timely and predictable as possible. The Chamber is aware of the work of the better regulation initiative and we encourage continued and increased vigilance in this area.

In the development of a stable and business friendly climate, hand in hand with appropriate regulation goes predictability. One of the most important aspects of running a business is planning – the greater the level of certainty and clarity involved in a project, the lower the risk and the greater the likelihood of success. Conversely, processes that are obfuscatory and unpredictable add costs and make doing business difficult.

One particular area in which Chamber members are experiencing a high level of unpredictability is in the realm of development – particularly when it comes to

¹¹ As ranked by Chamber membership in 2006 issues survey.

¹² A 2005 study conducted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business estimated the cost of regulatory compliance by business in Canada at \$33 billion annually. Accessed via www.cfib.ca

development in Halifax’s downtown core. There are two main challenges with respect to development approvals. The first relates to the approval process at the Municipal level, its length and the lack of clarity of development rules. The second relates to the development appeals process – the length of this process and the risk and uncertainty introduced by it. On the first issue, the Chamber, through its municipal affairs committee, will continue to follow HRM’s process and advocate to provide greater clarity to the Regional Plan through its review of secondary and community plans. Ways to address the second issue include: 1) modifying the Municipal Government Act to set timelines for the appeals process and decision-making, and 2) providing clarity on who can appeal development with primary consideration being given to those who are directly affected by a development.

ENERGY

- Nova Scotia relies on imported energy for approximately 90% of its energy needs.
- Since 1991 end-use energy demand in Canada has increased 12%.

Given the global environmental imperative coupled with security concerns which are exacerbated by our heavy reliance on energy from out-of-province, the Chamber recommends the province build a comprehensive long-term energy security policy, that we leverage existing expertise in our universities, colleges, and private sector to develop the strategies and activities to support this policy and that we develop the appropriate decision support tools to support this policy.

Furthermore, businesses, governments and individuals must work to increase energy productivity, turn to indigenous sources of energy and measure our energy use in order to track progress. The province can support these activities by creating an energy atlas for the province, identifying and assessing the different energy sources available throughout the province, developing effective programs to increase energy productivity in the residential and commercial sectors (space heating) and the transportation sector and monitoring and reporting, in a timely way, energy productivity and indigenous energy use data for all industry sectors in Nova Scotia. In a recent submission, the Chamber has also suggested ways these ideas can be incorporated into the province’s renewed energy strategy.

GOVERNMENT FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Currently Nova Scotia’s debt to GDP ratio is 38.2% and ranks 7th among the

	<p>provinces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spending growth continues to be high at 8.4% in 06/07 and 6.5% in 07/08.• Program spending has exceeded budget in each of FY 1999-2006.• Every year from 1999-2004 save 2001 percentage growth in spending has exceeded percentage growth in revenue. <p>The business performance of Chamber members is directly impacted by the current and future strength of our province and the Provincial Government's budgetary decisions. To that end, we encourage a course of restrained spending and continued debt reduction.</p> <p>Progress in this area has been steady and we were pleased this year to turn back the debt clock as sustained decreases in the net direct debt are expected.</p> <p>In the past the Chamber has called for more clarity into the process of determining what qualifies as extraordinary revenue to be put on the debt. There is a lack of checks and balances in the legislation to ensure that the full potential of monies is being allocated to the debt retirement fund. There should be a legislated requirement, not only for annual deposits to the Debt Management Fund, but also that the monies in this fund be allocated against the debt at least once every 5 years. The Chamber would also like to see the establishment of a committee to oversee the funds management.</p> <p>The Chamber previously called for a plan from the government, showing how it will bring this province closer to the national average Debt-to-GDP ratio. With a current ratio of 39% (March 2006, forecasted to be 38.2 in 2007), we have made great progress from a level of 41% in 2005, but are still concerned since the provincial average is 33.5%. We urge the Province to consider legislating improving targets for the Debt/GDP or debt servicing cost/total revenues, setting realistic bench marks and being publicly accountable regarding their ability to meet them.</p> <p>The Province's latest Debt Reduction Plan, introduced in 2005, has been a successful blue print to prudent fiscal policy. Our province has been able to reduce our risk profile for foreign debt. In this year's budget, foreign debt is expected to make up only 13% of total debt, down from as high as 72% in 1995 and almost 20% as recently as 2003.</p>
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	<p>With the continued high levels of net direct debt, high debt service costs and potential budget pressures noted in the 2006-2007 Forecast Update, the Chamber would encourage stronger debt management tools. This province should continue to strive for improved credit ratings and be able to position itself to weather any future economic downturn with aggressive debt management today.</p> <p>GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO BUSINESS</p> <p>The Chamber has significant concerns over the provision of government assistance to business that relates to the squeezing out of private providers of assistance to business (e.g. banks, credit unions) by providing a lower or no-cost alternative; the risk that programs and funding are not always linked to the achievement of long term, strategic, regional objectives; and potential negative consequences on the private sector such as creating an uneven corporate playing field.</p> <p>The most appropriate role of government with respect to the private sector is to create a business-friendly climate with a competitive tax system. A less burdensome tax environment reduces the cost of doing business and improves the competitiveness of every business in the region.</p> <p>Key to maintaining a favourable business climate is that government assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• is undertaken with a view of creating an economic return over the long term,• is undertaken with a view to increasing private investment in the region,• is accessible by all that meet set criteria in an open and transparent environment,• is administered independently, free of undue political influence. <p>Consideration should also be given to the impact that such support for one business may have on any existing businesses in the region.</p>
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CAPITALIZE ON OUR REPUTATION	
By 2010, HRM's renown as one of the continent's great cities – a beautiful, immensely liveable place that teems with history and creativity – will draw top-drawer companies and people to our community.	Halifax has over 250 years of brand recognition as an important port of call. HRM is the name of a corporate entity that is our municipal government. Halifax should be the name of our city, especially when representing it in other provinces, regions and countries. We encourage you in external communications to use the name Halifax when referring to our capital city.
CONVERT RIVALRIES INTO PARTNERSHIPS	
By 2010, each partner in the HRM's future will work in sync to propel our economy forward in a way that improves the quality of life for every citizen.	<p>IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION, CONSULTATION</p> <p>The Chamber feels that consultation is an important part of any new or changed legislation, regulations or policies. We appreciate the care some government departments currently take in many of their consultations. For example, we frequently receive communications from the Department of Environment and Labour on various regulatory and legislative changes and while we are not always able to respond directly to requests for input, we appreciate the opportunity to do so and to pass this information to our members so they may respond directly.</p>
	<p>WORKING TOGETHER WITH OTHER PROVINCES</p> <p>EQUALIZATION</p> <p>Our provincial government signed an agreement with the federal government regarding the treatment of offshore revenues that clearly states that offshore revenues will be excluded from the equalization formula "as it exists at the time". We view the shift in the federal government's approach with grave concern and support the province and the Premier in efforts to ensure the accord is fully honoured.</p>

GATEWAY

- Halifax has an 1800 nautical mile advantage over the west coast when it comes to shipping from India via the Suez Canal.
- Halifax has a one day time advantage over other east coast ports when it comes to shipping to the mid-west U.S.

If we are to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by emerging markets, our transportation links must be second to none. The excellent natural situation of our west coast ports has been enhanced by recent support of and investment in the Pacific Gateway. Trade via east coast ports and airports, with their many natural and geographic advantages, could likewise be enhanced with support and investment.

Truly, Canada's transportation gateways represent economic opportunities not just for those areas that house them, but also for those parts of the country to which these gateways link. Efficient gateways with sufficient capacity not only make Canada a more attractive and competitive place to do business: they also encourage increased trade and foreign direct investment. We must actively and intensely promote the east coast gateway, especially in China and India and we must encourage the federal government to do the same.

AIR ACCESS

As an integral part of an excellent international gateway, our airways are as important as our water and roadways. The Chamber strongly supports advancing towards commonality of international air policy with other key international arenas. To the extent possible, Canada's international policy should ultimately align with the already established principles supporting other Open Skies regimes, particularly with regards to the United States, European Union (EU) and Asia. For example, the United States and the EU have recently concluded an agreement that will see a substantially liberalized air transportation regime once implemented.

It will be extremely important to our markets, airports and airlines that Canada achieve agreements compatible with those EU provisions in the near future. Otherwise, Canada's communities, trade and tourism sectors and transportation participants risk being disadvantaged with future opportunities that will arise through such an open environment to counterparts in the United States and the EU.

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	<p>The Chamber supports efforts to evolve into a North American Aviation Area.</p> <p>The Chamber also supports pursuing multilateral approaches to future negotiations of international air transportation issues under an Open Skies environment.</p>
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CHAMBER ADVOCACY WORK

More information about the Chamber and its advocacy work can be accessed by contacting the office or visiting the Chamber web site:

Halifax Chamber of Commerce
656 Windmill Road, Suite 200
Dartmouth, NS B3B 1B8

Ph: (902) 468-7111
Fax: (902) 468-7333

info@halifaxchamber.com
www.halifaxchamber.com

For more information on Chamber
policy and advocacy, please contact:

Nancy Conrad
Senior Vice-President Policy
Tel. (direct): 481-1231
Email: nancy@halifaxchamber.com

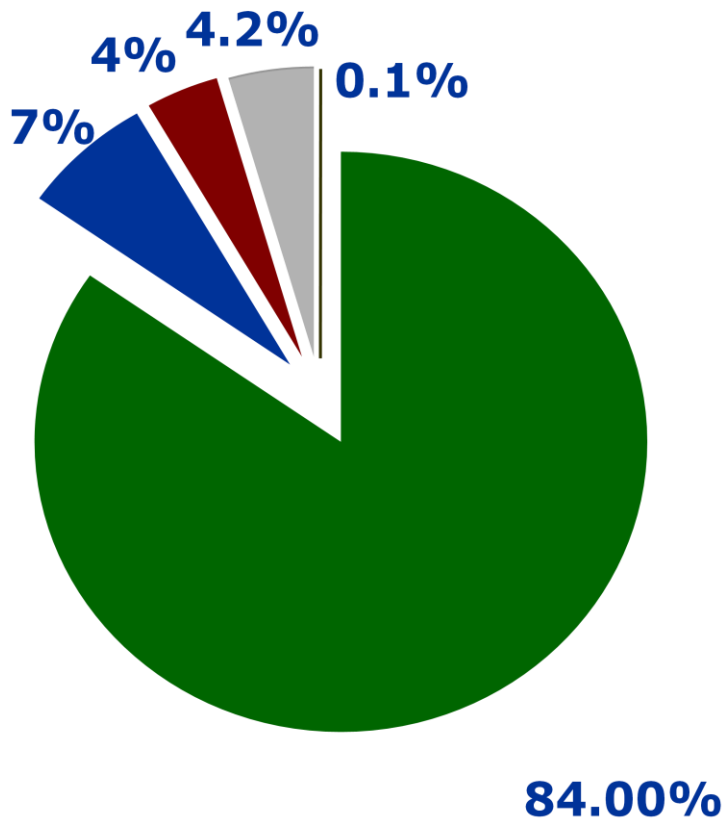
Maggie MacDonald
Policy Analyst
Tel. (direct): 481-1228
Email: Margaret@halifaxchamber.com

For information relating to Chamber
events and speaking engagements,
please contact:

Melissa Hawkes
Marketing and Special Events
Coordinator
Tel. (direct): 481-1350
Email: Melissa@halifaxchamber.com

CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

PERCENT OF MEMBERS BY BUSINESS SIZE



Total: 1,700 Businesses

- 1-25 84%
- 26-50 7%
- 51-100 4%
- 101+ 4.2%
- Other 0.1%

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PRIMARY ADVOCACY FOCUS AREAS AND ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

SUPER CHARGE OUR LABOUR FORCE

Health:

- Have an open discussion with Nova Scotians about other methods of health care service delivery and the additional costs that an ageing population will place on the Budget.
- Create a single, integrated long term plan that speaks to the sustainability of the health care system and addresses human and capital resource requirements and integrated information systems.
- Establish tax credits making reasonable amounts spent on elements of workplace wellness initiatives a non-taxable benefit.
- Explore ways for WCB to provide rate incentives for companies with comprehensive workplace wellness programs.

Employment:

- Work together to find ways to tap into underemployed sources of labour.
- Explore opportunities for bridging programs, as suggested in the Chamber's 2004 policy on immigration.

CREATE A GUNG-HO BUSINESS CLIMATE

Taxes:

- Raise the provincial component of the scientific research and development tax credit from 15% to 40%.
- Expedite elimination of the large corporation capital tax.
- Support HRM's tax reform exercise.

Regulation:

- Require consideration of the economic and business impacts of all new legislation and regulations before enacting them.
- Reconsider petroleum pricing regulation.
- Consider setting timelines for the appeals process and decision-making and provide greater clarity on who can appeal development decisions, with primary consideration being given to those who are directly impacted by the development.

Energy:

- Make energy security a fourth pillar of the province's new energy strategy.
- Build a comprehensive long-term energy security policy.

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- Leverage existing expertise in our universities, colleges, and private sector to develop the strategies and activities to support an energy security policy.
- Develop the appropriate decision support tools to support energy security policy.
- Create an energy atlas for the province, identifying and assessing the different energy sources available throughout the province.
- Develop effective programs to increase energy productivity in the residential and commercial sectors (space heating) and the transportation sector.
- Monitor and report, in a timely way, energy productivity and indigenous energy use data for all industry sectors in Nova Scotia.

Fiscal Responsibility:

- Stay the course of continued debt reduction.
- Restrain overall program spending.
- Legislate a requirement for annual deposits to the Debt Management Fund and that the monies in this fund are allocated against the debt at least once every 5 years.
- Establish a committee to oversee debt funds management.
- Consider legislating improved targets for the Debt/GDP or debt servicing cost/total revenues.
- Set realistic benchmarks and be publicly accountable regarding the ability to meet them.

CONVERT RIVALRIES INTO PARTNERSHIPS

- Consult on new legislation and regulations and on changes to existing legislation and regulations prior to enacting them.
- Tell us how we can support the province in urging the federal government to honour offshore accord agreements
- Actively and intensely promote the east coast gateway.

CAPITALIZE ON OUR REPUTATION

- In external communications use the name Halifax when referring to our capital city.

LEVERAGE OUR CREATIVE COMMUNITY

- Recognize and support the importance of the capital district especially the downtown core of Halifax and Dartmouth.

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RELATED POLICY DOCUMENTS

Policy: Crosswalk Safety Awareness Discussion Paper
Committee: Transportation
Date: 13-Apr-2007

Policy: Letter re.: Tax Reform - Commercial Burden of Taxes
Committee: Municipal Affairs
Date: 14-Mar-2007

Policy: Education Task Force Final Report
Committee: Education Task Force
Date: 7-Mar-2007

Policy: Chamber Submission to Service Nova Scotia on Assessment Capping
Committee: Staff
Date: 13-Feb-2007

Policy: Economic Strategy Scorecard 2007
Committee: Staff
Date: 13-Feb-2007

Policy: Provincial Pre-Budget Submission 2007
Committee: Provincial Affairs
Date: 31-Jan-2007

Policy: Letter re.: Tax Reform - Tax Competitiveness
Committee: Municipal Affairs
Date: 8-Jan-2007

Policy: International Air Policy
Committee: Transportation
Date: 15-Dec-2006

Policy: Response to Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity
Committee: Opportunities for Prosperity Sub-committee
Date: 5-Dec-2006

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Policy: Letter re.: Changes to the Assessment Act
Committee: Staff
Date: 30-Nov-2006

Policy: Skills Policy Statement
Committee: Business Environment
Date: 28-Nov-2006

Policy: Energy Security Policy
Committee: Business Environment
Date: 14-Nov-2006

Policy: Transport Canada Air Liberalization Submission
Committee: Transportation
Date: 8-Nov-2006

Policy: HealthMonitor Scorecard
Committee: Health Action
Date: 27-Oct-2006

Policy: Health Monitor
Committee: Health Action
Date: 21-Mar-2006

Policy: Provincial Pre-Budget Submission
Committee: Provincial Affairs
Date: 14-Feb-2006

Policy: Recommendations on a Family Business Stream for the Provincial Nominee
Committee: Immigration Sub-Committee
Date: 24-Nov-2005

Policy: Review of "Opportunities for Prosperity" Nova Scotia's economic development strategy
Committee: Opportunities for Prosperity Sub-committee
Date: 25-Oct-2005

Policy: Recommendations on an Entrepreneur Stream for the Provincial Nominee Program
Committee: Immigration Sub-Committee

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Date: 29-Sep-2005

Policy: Immigration in Nova Scotia
Committee: Business Environment
Date: 14-Jul-2004

Policy: A Healthier Community is a Stronger Community
Committee: Health Care Task Force
Date: 17-Dec-2001

Policy: Health Task Force Report
Committee: Health Care Task Force
Date: 30-Nov-2001