



**(Chatham-Kent ON) February 26, 2016** Fundamentally, the Chatham-Kent Chamber supports issues concerning the environment and believes it will remain a challenge globally. Locally there are businesses, such as Greenfield Specialty Alcohols, that have found creative and innovative solutions that are environmentally friendly. Everyone is personally concerned about the impact of carbon emissions on the environment. We do applaud the Provincial Liberal Government for attempting to create control measures through the proposed Cap and Trade framework.

What the Provincial Government has failed to recognize is the impact on communities like Chatham-Kent. Vehicle emissions remain one of the single largest contributors to carbon emissions, however, in a municipality such as Chatham-Kent driving at any distance isn't optional. Given our unique geographic size, driving to and from work is a necessity and not a luxury. We do not have a mass transit infrastructure. We are being penalized as a result of our geographic makeup. Any increase to gasoline prices is going to be felt throughout the local economy, including the cost of food at our grocery store and especially with produce.

Additionally, this dramatically restrains our small businesses from growth and expansion. Increasing the estimated cost by approximately \$170,000 in 2017 will prevent the hiring of additional employees and, in some cases, may result in job loss that will further stunt our opportunities to create sustainable growth. Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce Chair, Christopher June, stated, "This will impact hundreds of local businesses and thousands of Chatham-Kent residents which, in turn, increases an already overly stressed social service system."

Chatham-Kent's Mayor Randy Hope echoes the same concerns as the Chamber and adds that, "The provincial government's cap and trade strategy needs to consider how rural communities that have dispersed populations need cars to get to work and carry out daily activities. Increasing taxes on gasoline and natural gas is unfair when the population has no alternatives." He also adds that, "Chatham-Kent has been a leader in creating a community of Green energy; with 25% of the province's wind energy being produced here and 11% of the country's wind, with a large amount of solar and bio gas being produced here as well. There are better ways to attack the issues facing this province."