



For Immediate Release
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RECORD DEFICIT REINFORCES NEED FOR PRUDENT PLAN: CHAMBER

Chatham-Kent: The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) urge the provincial government to develop a comprehensive and practical plan to eliminate the provincial deficit in as reasonable a timeframe as possible, while remaining resolute in the direction it has set for comprehensive tax reform.

“While we are dismayed at the size of the provincial deficit we commend the Ontario government for the bold steps it has taken this year to improve Ontario’s competitive position, and stimulate business investment and job growth in the long term,” says Daryl Dawson, Chair of the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce.

“Our members had accepted a deficit for the purpose of stimulus spending as long as there is a practical plan to eliminate it,” says Len Crispino, President & CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. “The sheer size of the deficit announced today underscores the importance of a practical plan to return to a balanced budget.”

The Chamber organizations commend the government’s plan for a comprehensive review of public expenditures and also recommends the deficit reduction plan adopt the following principles:

1. The Ontario government should focus on long-term, sustainable fiscal solutions, to address the budget deficit; rather than short term “quick fixes”.
2. The Ontario government should establish firm expenditure targets.
3. Smarter, more efficient spending must be applied to all programs – including health care, which is Ontario’s fastest growing expense.
4. In addition to eliminating the deficit, the government should lay the foundations to reduce debt, in the long-term.
5. Central to improving Ontario’s fiscal position is the need to stimulate economic renewal and business competitiveness.
6. Ontario must address long-term demographic risks to its future health care costs.
7. The Ontario government should remain committed to the principles and timelines of the comprehensive tax reform announced in the March 2009 Ontario budget.

The OCC and member network of Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade around the province, have advocated for many years for comprehensive tax reform. With a more competitive tax environment secured through a lower marginal effective tax rate, and keeping in mind the growing

provincial deficit, the government's focus must now be to return the province to a stronger fiscal position.

Ontario is not the only jurisdiction facing an eroding fiscal position. But rather than use that as a reason not to take action, vigilant adherence to the above principles will help Ontario emerge stronger and faster from the current economic difficulties, than its competitors.

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The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce is an active member of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Canadian Chamber of Commerce representing the Voice of Business of 500 members in Chatham-Kent.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) is a federation of 160 local Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade in the Province of Ontario, representing 60,000 businesses of all sizes, in all economic sectors and from every area of the province. In its mandate to advocate strong policies on issues affecting its members, the OCC is currently focused on economic renewal and business competitiveness. Its over-arching goal is to make Ontario the most competitive jurisdiction in North America.

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