



## Ontario Chamber Calls for Economic Stimulus Package

**TORONTO** - Declining optimism about Ontario's economic outlook among its members, leads "Ontario's Business Advocate" to call on the provincial government to make an economic stimulus package the cornerstone of its 2008 Budget.

"Businesses throughout Ontario, are feeling weathered and beaten by the economic storm that has been buffeting Ontario," says Len Crispino, President & CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC). "They're in urgent need of short term relief, particularly in the manufacturing sector, while the long term health of our economy is dependent upon decisive action taken today to spur economic growth, strengthen our communities and build a 'next generation' workforce."

In a survey of its members representing a cross-section of the province's business community, diverse by location, sector and size, just 16% of respondents anticipate the economy to perform stronger in 2008 while 47% expect it will be weaker.

In a meeting with Finance Minister Dwight Duncan, the OCC has asked the province to embrace a number of key recommendations ([2008 Provincial Pre-budget Submission](#)) that include:

- Revamping the tax structure in order to reduce the marginal effective tax burden of capital and labour – currently almost double the average of five of Ontario's peer jurisdictions – by eliminating the small business surtax and reducing corporate tax rates
- Determining the feasibility of a "Made-in-Ontario" harmonized sales tax
- Strengthening Ontario communities by expeditiously uploading social services
- Establishing Canadian content levels for publicly tendered transportation

infrastructure projects to support domestic industry and the communities in which they operate

“Employers in every community in this province have made it loud and clear that they’re more worried about Ontario’s economic performance and their own company prospects than they’ve been in the last five years. While the government may not be able to directly impact the state of the US economy or the strength of the Canadian dollar, two clear reasons for waning optimism, the government can create an environment that encourages, not penalizes, investment in physical, human and capital resources, and promotes greater trade diversification,” explains Crispino.

The OCC member survey was conducted from December 2007 to January 2008, gathered 667 responses from 70 local Chambers of Commerce/Boards of Trade, and is considered accurate 19 times out of 20, with a plus/minus margin of 4.965%.

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The OCC represents over 57,000 businesses through 160 local Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, and has been Ontario’s business advocate since 1911. Its advocacy and policy initiatives focus on six areas key to the economic well-being of the province: health; education; energy; finance & taxation; transportation & infrastructure; and border issues.

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