

## *2023 Canadian Chamber of Commerce Policy Agenda*

Annually, at their AGM, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC) hosts a round of policy debates from policy resolution crafted by regional chambers of commerce across the country. Following extensive reviews from the provincial caucus and debate on the floor, the CCC will follow through on these [recommendations](#) and use them to guide their work for the year ahead. This is a vital opportunity for regional chambers to have their voice and issues amplified to the federal chamber network. The Guelph Chamber of Commerce is proud to have sponsored or supported in the passing in the following resolutions.

### *Innovation and Technology*

#### **Artificial Intelligence in Canada**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming increasingly understood as having many practical applications and is being utilized by individuals and organizations. Many believe that now is the time for the Government of Canada to begin work on supporting this technology. This resolution provides some framework for the government of Canada to begin establishing a regulatory framework surrounding AI, enabling its research, development, and effectiveness of use by businesses.

The CCC recommends that the Government of Canada:

1. Implement a flexible, principles-based legal framework for AI technology in Canada, that remains aligned with other international approaches and recognizes and incorporates already existing industry best practices for responsible AI. Additionally, support selfregulatory initiatives for responsible AI before a legal framework is established.
2. Financially support and incentivize AI research, development, and innovation in Canada, and model these initiatives based on successful practices implemented in other countries.
3. Financially support and incentivize AI adoption and implementation in business operations and processes to improve the efficiency and productivity of Canadian businesses as well as to the public service and federally regulated sectors to streamline services and operations.
4. Financially support and incentivize comprehensive employee transition support, such as upskilling and reskilling training programs, to ensure a seamless and inclusive adaptation of the workforce to AI technology integration.

#### **Assisting Small Business with Protecting their Data and Business from Cybercrime**

Cybercrime is a monumental problem for businesses of all size, but the cost and maintenance of cyber security measures inhibits SMES across Canada. These recommendations will enable the Government of Canada to make cyber security more accessible and affordable for SMEs.

The CCC recommends that the Government of Canada:

1. Broaden the scope of the existing Canadian Digital Adoption Program (CDAP) or create a similar grant program focused on cyber security which will allow SMBs to access comprehensive cybersecurity products and services;
2. Provide specific annual tax credits for the ongoing support and maintenance required from Third Party vendors for SMEs that have satisfied the grant program to assess their technology;

3. Allow SMEs to write off 100% of their business investments in preventative cybersecurity related software, equipment and other costs (support services and outsourcing costs) in the year those investments are made;
4. Provide a subsidy for training of staff on cybersecurity awareness programs; and
5. Create a SME Cyber Defence Fund that provides SMEs with the necessary support to improve their cyber resilience and close the cybersecurity investment

## *Supply Chains*

### **Strengthen the Resilience of Canada's Food and Beverage Industry by Reinforcing and Stabilizing the Supply Chain of Strategic Commodities**

Canada's food and beverage industry represents the second largest manufacturing industry in Canada. This industry relies heavily on the availability of resources to maintain competitiveness and stimulate economic growth. This resolution puts forward a set of recommendations that can strengthen supply chains.

The CCC recommends that the Government of Canada:

1. Identify, monitor and address barriers that emerge from imported commodities of domestic producers of consumer-ready goods in the Food and Beverage Industry, particularly those that are dependent on products as a major input to their production.
2. Investigate updating trade relationships and the Special Import Measures Act to ease the burden on Canadian Producers from purchasing source commodities without incurring anti-dumping duties during times of significant supply chain disruption.
3. In collaboration with industry stakeholders, investigate and support innovative means of producing the raw materials that currently do not originate in Canada to further strengthen a domestic supply chain for the Food and Beverage industry.

## *Mental Health, Homelessness and Addiction*

### **Bail Reform, Mental Health and Addiction Supports as Essential Components to Increasing Safety in Canadian Cities**

There has been an increase to those most vulnerable in our communities struggling with mental health, homelessness, and addictions. This resolution strives to put forward recommendations that can help reduce incidence of Crime in Canada's downtown cores and support business, organizations, and adversely impact by the mental health and homelessness crisis.

The CCC recommends that the Government of Canada:

1. Modernize the Criminal Code to ensure there is a reasonable bail threshold, especially for violent and repeat offenders, while also ensuring that those who repeatedly interact with the justice system have better access to diversion programs such as housing options, mental health and addiction programs, wrap around social services, etc. in order to help prevent those released on bail and those exiting the correctional system from falling into homelessness, addictions and/or reoffending.

2. Improve workforce development programs for inmates in the Canadian Correctional System (CCS), to increase opportunities to enter the workforce upon release.
3. Provide more funding for bail supervision programs to monitor those who are released on bail - particularly those who may pose a higher risk or have greater needs - and help ensure they can access community services that they may require in order to stay compliant with the conditions of their bail.

## *Healthcare*

### **Creating a national strategy regarding healthcare credentials**

In Ontario the inability to obtain a family physician, long wait times, and a lack of skilled labour all attributing to a crisis in our health care system. While work has been done to increase international recruitment and skills development domestically, instead, this resolution looks to address the mobility of physicians and skilled labour by increasing credential recognition between provinces.

The CCC recommends that the Government of Canada:

1. Create a national strategy to assist provinces and territories in recognizing out-of-province and international healthcare credentials; and
2. Create a national proficiency exam that allows national labour mobility for healthcare workers new to Canada, currently working in a province, or newly graduated.

### **Creating Systems to Provide Adequate Child-care Spaces to Ensure Parents - Particularly Women - Have Equal Opportunities to Enter the Workforce**

The CWELCC system, or the 10\$-a-day childcare system, has created an increased demand for regulated childcare providers. This increased demand without the adequate workforce or facilities in place has left families, in particular women, struggling to enter or re-enter the workforce as they have little to no option for affordable daycare. The recommendations in this resolution look to increase the amount of those willing to work as an ECE through various incentives and innovations.

The CCC Recommends that the Government of Canada:

1. Work with provincial/territorial governments to explore all prospective ways that could increase compensation for ECE workers in effort to attract more workers into the childcare sector with the goal of reducing wait lists at licensed child-care centre, setting the stage for more parents – particularly women - to enter or re-enter the workforce.
2. Work with provincial/territorial governments to examine all potential solutions to ensure there are systems in place, possibly financial, to ensure adequate child-care spaces are available to provide parents – particularly women – the opportunity to enter or re-enter the workforce.
3. Recognize the critical role of private sector in delivering child-care services and advocate for a continued role for entrepreneurs and businesses to provide child-care through public debate on the subject, and through the CCC's advocacy with federal policy-makers

## *Finance*

### **Driving Innovation in Canada**

Announced in 2017, the Intellectual Property Strategy was put forward to help Canadian businesses, creation, entrepreneurs, and innovators understand intellectual property. This recommendation is aimed at improving the strategy to encourage business investment into Intellectual Property and innovation to improve productivity, economic growth, and incomes for Canadians.

The CCC recommends that the Government of Canada:

1. Complete the study on a national “patent box” strategy to encourage business investment in innovation in Canada by 2025, to be implemented for 2026.
2. Consult with senior business leaders and technologists to define what intellectual property would qualify, e.g., patents, copyright, industrial design, and for what duration.
3. Ensure that any such regime adopted in Canada delivers the clarity and simplicity that encourages participation in innovation from both SMEs and large companies.
4. Develop a federal program modelled after the “My First Patent Program” using the Quebec model as a template to encourage more investment by SMEs across the country.
5. Review the Patent Collective Program and update funding to meet the needs of new potential innovators.