

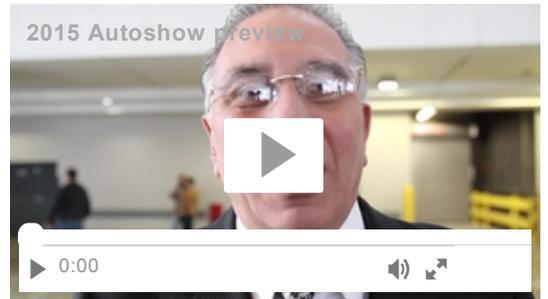
# NEWS

NEWS

## Chamber of Commerce calls for cross-border shopping tax rebate



Matt Marchand is photographed at the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce offices in Windsor on Monday, December 15, 2014. (TYLER BROWNBRIDGE/The Windsor Star)



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**Carolyn Thompson**

Jan 09, 2015 - 9:00 AM EST

Last Updated: Jan 09, 2015 - 9:00 AM EST

Windsor's local Chamber of Commerce has joined the call for a tax rebate aimed at enticing Americans to come shopping across the border.

Matt Marchand, president and CEO of the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce, said with the low price of gas and dropping value of the Canadian dollar, it's time to take aggressive measures to bring tourism into the region.

“We think the fact that we’re a recovering economy, we have a lower dollar, there’s really no cost to the government doing this, we think it’s a win-win for Windsor-Essex retailers,” he said. “We have an opportunity here to generate some additional economic activity here in Windsor-Essex.”

The Road Travel Rebate Incentive Program (TRIP), proposed by Frontier Duty Free Association, would see a five per cent tourist rebate — the same value as GST — included in the 2015 federal budget.

American tourists could get the rebate on purchases made during their trip at the Canadian Duty Free shops when crossing a land border

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Canada had a similar rebate program in the past that was eliminated by Jim Flaherty on April 1, 2007.

Marchand said with Michigan’s economic resurgence, boosted recently both by [Obama](#) and by [Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan](#), comes a strong market of American consumers who could be spending their money in Windsor and Essex County.

Marchand said the infrastructure is already in place to get the program running again. An economic study suggests that the program could bring in up to \$40 million, and even under poor economic conditions it would be “revenue neutral.”

Over the past decade the number of American visitors to Canada has decreased by 24 per cent, according to a news release issued by the Chambers of Commerce. The same news release said that lower U.S. sales tax and the high value of the Canadian dollar led to American tourists spending more than 30 per cent less when they did cross.

As well, the release called a 14 per cent decline in the number of travellers crossing the border by car between 2008 and 2013 “alarming.”

More to come.

[ctthompson@windsorstar.com](mailto:ctthompson@windsorstar.com) or on Twitter [@caroethompson](#)

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