

# WINDSOR-ESSEX REGIONAL Chamber of Commerce

---

**MEDIA RELEASE, Embargoed Until 12:01 a.m.**

**January 26, 2016**

## **Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber and Ontario Chamber Deliver Landmark Agenda to Grow Economy and Spur Job Creation**

**Ontario Business Confidence drops by 17 points to a five-year low**

Windsor, ON – Today, the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce (WERCC), Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) and other chambers across the province in partnership with the Mowat Centre, released its fifth and final iteration of *Emerging Stronger*.

*Emerging Stronger 2016* identifies the immediate steps that government and the private sector must take to enhance Ontario's economic competitiveness and spur job creation in the province.

Ontario businesses are increasingly unsure about the direction of the provincial economy, according to a new survey from the OCC and Leger. The annual *Ontario Business Confidence Index*, featured in *Emerging Stronger 2016*, shows that business confidence in the Ontario economy is at a five-year low.

The *Index* shows that only 30 percent of businesses are confident in Ontario's economy, compared to 47 percent in 2012. It also shows that 62 percent of businesses are confident in their own organization's outlook, down from a high of 74 percent in 2014.

"The WERCC and its community partners will continue to work together to boost confidence and drive investment. The 25 detailed recommendations in *Emerging Stronger 2016* are focused on these initiatives," said Matt Marchand, President & CEO, WERCC.

"Ontario businesses are looking for stability and economic certainty," said Allan O'Dette, President and CEO of the OCC. "*Emerging Stronger* offers a detailed roadmap for how government can work with the business sector to achieve their shared goals."

Among the key findings of the *Ontario Business Confidence Index*:

- 30 percent of businesses believe the Ontario economy is going in the right direction, compared to 42 percent in 2012.
- 48 percent of businesses plan to expand in the next five years, down 14 points from 2013.
- The automotive/manufacturing sector is among the least confident in the province. Just 53 percent of businesses in that sector are confident in their own organization's economic outlook, compared to a 62 percent provincial average.

# WINDSOR-ESSEX REGIONAL Chamber of Commerce

---

The detailed policy recommendations in *Emerging Stronger 2016* are focused on increasing economic stability, supporting investment and fostering business growth across the province by improving the way government works, taking advantage of new opportunities in the global economy, and strategically investing in our competitive advantages.

*Emerging Stronger 2016* also highlights the need to offset negative impacts of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) on Ontario's auto sector.

*Emerging Stronger* points out that the TPP gives a marked advantage to low wage Asian suppliers of auto parts and calls for a targeted investment strategy for the Ontario-based manufacturing sector. "This is part of our comprehensive advocacy on the auto sector," said Marchand. The WERCC has been raising concerns about the impacts of the TPP on the auto sector for a number of months.

Another key parameter of *Emerging Stronger* is to meet the challenge by Premier Kathleen Wynne to double exports by 2020 in our agriculture sector, one of the key economic drivers in Windsor-Essex.

Also included in *Emerging Stronger* are recommendations to address the skills gap, which is a significant issue in the Windsor-Essex region and beyond. "We need to challenge ourselves collectively to get this major economic impediment reduced," added Marchand.

And finally, *Emerging Stronger* recommends that the main Research and Development vehicle for Canadian firms, called the Scientific Research and Experimental Development (or SR&ED), be restored to 20%. It was reduced to 15% in 2014. "Windsor-Essex has a large usage of SR&ED to position for our future and we need to encourage research and development," said Marchand.

About the *Ontario Business Confidence Index*:

The annual *Ontario Business Confidence Index* is the most comprehensive survey of business opinion in the province (1,310 respondents, survey conducted in November 2015). The margin of error for the survey is 2.71%, 19 times out of 20. The OCC began collecting this data in 2012.

Visit [www.windsor-essexchamber.org/in\\_the\\_news/media-releases](http://www.windsor-essexchamber.org/in_the_news/media-releases) to read *Emerging Stronger 2016*.

-30-

For more information contact:  
Lindsey Rivait, Communications Coordinator  
Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce  
lrivait@windsor-essexchamber.org  
(519) 966-3696 ext. 228