

WINDSOR-ESSEX REGIONAL Chamber of Commerce

MEDIA RELEASE

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Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber Secures Province Wide Chamber Support for Key Local Agricultural and Small Business Issues: PACA and TRIP at the Ontario Chamber AGM

Cornwall, ON – The Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce secured province wide support for two key local issues to help create and maintain a competitive business environment for agriculture and small business in the region.

1. **Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA).** The Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber held an information session in February regarding the U.S. government's decision in October 2014 to remove a long standing trading privilege in place for 75 years for fruit and vegetable growers under PACA.

Effective as of now, Canadian companies will have to pay twice the amount they are owed to get access to unpaid funds. For example, if a local grower was owed \$50,000 for tomatoes they would have to post a \$100,000 bond in order to make a claim to get their unpaid money. Many small businesses cannot post that kind of money. If they were under PACA they would not have to pay the double bond. Previously, it was only \$100 to start the process under PACA.

The Ontario chambers agreed with the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber that Canada should implement a similar system to the U.S. so that Canadian companies are covered under PACA. Agriculture is the number one or number two industry in Ontario and the number one industry in the County of Essex.

2. **Travel Rebate Incentive Plan (TRIP).** This is a proposed tax rebate plan that would encourage U.S. residents to visit Canada by offering a 5% rebate (equal to the GST) on purchases made during their trip. It is for travelers passing through land borders. Tourism spending by Americans is down by nearly 33% over the past 10 years or so and this is an opportunity to get that business back.

“This was a very successful AGM for the agriculture sector, small business and Windsor-Essex Region,” said Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber President and CEO, Matt Marchand. “We have to grow our agri-food business, tourism and our local economy and these steps will help contribute to the success of our business community.”

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