

MEDIA RELEASE

May 1, 2016

Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber Secures Support for Deferring TPP, Closing Skills Gap, Strongly Encouraging Domestic Steel, One Time Allocation Connecting Link Program and Transparency for Development Charges at Ontario Chamber AGM

Oakville, ON – The Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce (WERCC) secured provincial support for key issues for Windsor-Essex: for the government of Canada to defer TPP until after the U.S. federal election, closing the skills gap, encouraging the use of domestic steel for federal and provincial government projects, transparency for development charges and \$30 million for the Connecting Link Program. This took place at the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) Annual General Meeting, April 28 – May 1 in Oakville, Ontario.

1. Trans Pacific Partnership. The WERCC was successful in getting Chambers across Ontario to ask the government to defer a parliamentary debate on TPP until after the federal election to ensure maximum flexibility. WERCC President & CEO Matt Marchand previously raised this issue in a Rotary speech in February.

2. Addressing local labour market needs through the Ontario Provincial Nominee Program. Employers across Ontario, in particularly in Windsor-Essex, are experiencing a shortage of qualified employees and a shrinking labour market. According to a recent OCC survey, 51 percent of employers in the Windsor-Essex/Sarnia region have had difficulty filling a job opening over the past year and a half

The WERCC and Chambers across Ontario recommend that the Government of Ontario work with the Federal Government to implement changes to the Ontario Provincial Nominee Program to address local labour shortages. Two key recommendation is to eliminate the requirement for a labour market impact assessment for communities under 200,000 population and for PNP participants to be hired in Ontario and expanding the list of eligible professions to include trades professionals.

The Conference Board of Canada estimates that the skills gap costs the Ontario economy up to \$24.3 billion in foregone GDP, or approximately \$600 million in the Windsor-Essex region, and \$3.7 billion in provincial tax revenues annually.

3. The WERCC successfully amended a resolution on steel (Support Ontario's Steel Industry and its Supply Chain Clusters) to include that the Government of Ontario should strongly encourage local suppliers and domestic steel content be used in ALL provincially and federally funded projects if the materials can be supplied from domestic sources.

WINDSOR-ESSEX REGIONAL Chamber of Commerce

4. The WERCC also supported resolutions on having on-line **transparency** for **Development Charges** for all communities across Ontario and strongly supported a resolution for a **one time allocation of \$30 million Connecting Link Funding**, which recently did not include any allocation for Windsor-Essex.

The WERCC would like to express its thanks to the Oakville Chamber of Commerce, Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and the Sault Ste. Marie Chamber of Commerce for their leadership and support.

“This was a very successful AGM across the spectrum for the Windsor-Essex Region,” said Marchand.

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