

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **B.C.'s Chambers call for dialogue toward a value-added tax, mobility pricing to fund transportation, better access to Canada Job Grant**

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#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**KELOWNA, June 1, 2016** – Business leaders from across B.C. have passed policies calling for PST reforms and a dialogue toward a value-added tax; mobility pricing to manage congestion and fund transportation; and better employer access to the Canada Job Grant to drive a skilled workforce.

These policies were passed at the BC Chamber Annual General Meeting & Conference, the province's foremost business gathering, held this year in Kelowna, May 29 - 31.

This unique grassroots policy-building forum brings together approximately 200 Chamber delegates from across B.C. to vote on new business/economic policies. Policies that are adopted become part of the BC Chamber's advocacy agenda. This year, delegates voted on 55 proposed policies. The first 29 were voted on May 30; please see news release [here](#). The remaining 26 were voted on May 31. Of the proposed policies put forward this year, 49 were successful on the policy floor.

Policies voted into force May 31 include:

- Public Investment in BC Ferries Infrastructure
- Ridesharing – Supporting Industry Innovation
- Filling the Gap Through Economic Immigration
- Support of a Federal Excise Tax Review for Distilled Spirits
- A Canada Job Grant Program for All Canadian Business
- Supporting Canada's Air Travel Industry Through Lower Fees
- Addressing Barriers to Succession Planning for Small and Medium Enterprises
- Changing B.C.'s Sales Tax Model – Moving Beyond the PST
- Protection of Industrial Lands for Future Prosperity
- Supporting B.C.'s Steelmaking Coal Industry
- Supporting Canada's Responsible Resource Development
- The Need for an Innovative Approach to Transportation for an Increasingly Urban Province
- Enhancing Canada's Air Travel Competitiveness

Draft versions of these proposed policies are available on the BC Chamber website [here](#); please note that these may not be identical to the versions passed, due to amendments made on the policy floor.

Quotes from Maureen Kirkbride, Interim CEO, BC Chamber of Commerce:

On the BC Chamber policy process:

“Our policy development process canvasses the best and brightest ideas from business leaders right across B.C. Once again this year, this unique grassroots process has delivered some excellent policy recommendations to help enhance B.C. as a business jurisdiction.”

On PST reform and a dialogue towards a value-added-tax:

“Every extra day British Columbia operates under the broken and archaic PST, we do our economy, our businesses, and our residents a major disservice. We need to take action on our tax problem now – both by passing measures to mitigate the damage the PST does, and then by launching dialogues towards a new, made-in-B.C. value-added tax that will take our economy and our province forward.”

On mobility pricing to manage congestion and fund transportation:

“A strong transportation system is absolutely critical to B.C.’s livability and economic growth. And with urban areas such as the Lower Mainland anticipating significant population growth over the coming years, it’s critical that we have tools and strategies in place that both alleviate congestion and fund our transportation infrastructure. We see mobility pricing as an equitable and efficient way to tackle both of these goals.”

On better employer access to the Canada Job Grant:

“A skilled B.C. workforce is just so critical to our province’s future. And the Canada Job Grant is a very promising initiative, however, as always, the devil is in the details. And right now, we’re seeing some glitches in how the program has been implemented that are stopping many B.C. businesses from accessing this grant for their employees. So we’re calling for fixes to the program, to ensure that British Columbians are truly able to secure the skills funding that they need.”

*The BC Chamber is the largest and most broadly-based business organization in the province. Representing more than 125 Chambers of Commerce and 36,000 businesses of every size, sector and region of the province, the BC Chamber of Commerce is “The Voice of Business in BC.”*

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