

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **B.C.'s Chambers call for housing ownership data, support of wineries, and taxation of sharing economy**

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#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**KELOWNA, May 30, 2016** – Business leaders from across B.C. have passed policies calling for a study to collect and analyze citizenship and residency data on all B.C. real estate; support for wineries; and taxation on short-term rental stays, such as those through Airbnb.

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 are voting on 55 proposed policies. Delegates voted in 23 of 29 policies up for debate yesterday (May 30); voting continues this afternoon.

Policies voted into force so far include:

- Equitable Hospital Capital Taxation for British Columbia
- Reviewing Regional District Accountability
- Customer Produced Power Improving BC Hydro Policy
- Real Estate, Citizenship and Residency Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting
- Small Business Benefits from Simplifying the MSP Tax System
- Taxation of Short Term Residential Rental Units
- Protecting Old Growth Rainforest to the Economic Benefit of Tourism Based Communities
- The Need for a Renewed Softwood Lumber Agreement
- Supporting B.C.'s Land-Based Wineries, Cideries and Distilleries
- Addressing the Housing Crunch Through Increasing Supply
- Affordable Rental Housing and a Fluid Labour Market
- The Costs of Retail Crime

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 real estate data collection:

“We need to bring facts and data to the heated debates that currently surround B.C.’s real estate market. And while the B.C. government’s recent move to require the collection of citizenship and residency data in real estate transactions is a step in the right direction, it won’t deliver sufficient facts with any speed. Given the impact that B.C.’s high real estate costs have on British Columbians and B.C. businesses, we’re pushing for a full study of ownership data so that we’re all working from a basis of facts as we look for solutions to B.C.’s real estate challenges.”

On supporting wineries:

“B.C. wineries, while largely agricultural operations, are currently taxed at a light industry rate rather than the much-lower farm rate. Our network is calling for some tax relief for wineries, to better enable them to invest in their businesses and grow. As wineries are key catalysts of the tourism industry, this move would also promote broader regional benefits.”

On taxation of the sharing economy:

“The sharing economy brings exciting new opportunities for British Columbians, but we need to ensure that appropriate taxes are collected on these new business models. In the case of short-term rentals, we also need to ensure an equal playing field for our existing hotels and other tourism businesses as they try to compete with newcomers who, for now, aren’t paying tax.”

*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.”*



Suite #1201-750 West Pender Street,  
Vancouver, BC V6C 2T8  
(604) 683-0700 Fax: (604) 683-0416  
Website: [www.bcchamber.org](http://www.bcchamber.org)

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For further details, please contact:

Dan Baxter  
Director of Policy Development, Government & Stakeholder Relations  
BC Chamber of Commerce  
C 778.986.5001  
E [dbaxter@bcchamber.org](mailto:dbaxter@bcchamber.org)

Jenny MacPhee  
Manager, Communications  
BC Chamber of Commerce  
C 604.366.4990  
E [jmacphee@bcchamber.org](mailto:jmacphee@bcchamber.org)