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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **BC Chamber calls on political candidates to talk accountability**

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#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Vancouver, October 22, 2014** – As B.C. celebrates Small Business Week 2014 (Oct. 20 – 24) amidst municipal political campaigns, the BC Chamber of Commerce is calling on candidates to voice their views on how to improve local government performance and accountability.

B.C.'s Chambers this year passed policy calling for the province to take a cue from Ontario and develop a system to identify core municipal services, as well as metrics that allow for cross-municipal comparisons of performance.

“Chambers recognize that municipalities face major cost pressures due to aging infrastructure,” said John Winter, president and CEO of the BC Chamber of Commerce. “In a context where every penny counts, it’s critical that municipalities commit firmly to efficiency and spending restraint, and that taxpayers be able to assess how well their municipality stacks up to peers in delivering core services.”

Chambers have also called for municipalities to report annually to the public on all non-core business activities by providing a cost/benefit evaluation of taxpayer investment.

“In a time of tight budgets, it’s important that taxpayers have a clear view of the costs and benefits of all discretionary programs that their municipality provides,” Winter said.

Local government spending and accountability are critical issues for small business owners, who shoulder a disproportionate amount of the municipal tax burden due to business tax rates.

“All taxpayers care about government accountability, but businesses have even more skin in the game due to their tax rates,” Winter said. “That’s why Small Business Week is a great time for political candidates to identify their stance on these tangible Chamber proposals for increased local government accountability.”

This week, B.C.'s Chambers have also called on municipal political candidates to voice their views on business property 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.”*

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