

NEWS RELEASE

BC Chamber calls on political candidates to talk voting rights for businesses

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vancouver, October 23, 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 bringing back the business vote.

“Many taxpaying business owners in B.C. don’t live in the same town as their business – meaning they don’t get a vote,” said John Winter, president and CEO of the BC Chamber of Commerce. “These businesses have no voice in any election or referendum process that will directly impact their business. This is ‘Taxation without representation’ and it’s time we fix it.”

Up until 1993, B.C.’s businesses had a business or “corporate” vote, meaning that they could vote in municipal elections.

This year, B.C.’s Chambers called for the Province to work towards introducing a business vote for businesses where the business owner does not reside in the same municipality where the business property is located.

Chambers noted that municipalities’ significant authority under the Community Charter, combined with a lack of voting rights for business owners, has led to the development of significant inequities between business and residential property tax rates in the province.

“Business owners already shoulder a disproportionate proportion of the municipal tax burden,” Winter said. “But non-resident business owners are totally disenfranchised – and that’s an injustice B.C. needs to address.”

Winter noted that there’s precedent for giving a vote to non-resident business owners. Currently, residential property tax payers have the right to vote in both the municipality where they reside as well as in another municipality where they own property as a non-resident owner.

As B.C. celebrates Small Business Week, B.C.’s Chambers are calling on municipal political candidates to state their views on bringing back the business vote for non-resident business owners in their community.

This week, B.C.'s Chambers have also called on municipal political candidates to voice their views on [business property tax](#) and on Chamber proposals to enhance [local government accountability](#).

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."

- 30 -

For further details, please contact:

John Winter
President & CEO
BC Chamber of Commerce
T 604.638.8110
C 604.376.3577
E jwinter@bcchamber.org

Jenny MacPhee
Communications Officer
BC Chamber of Commerce
T 604.638.8114
C 604.366.4990
E jmacphee@bcchamber.org