
NEWS RELEASE

BC Chamber welcomes prudent, targeted federal budget

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vancouver, February 11, 2014 – The BC Chamber of Commerce welcomes the federal government’s prudent, targeted budget.

“We’re pleased to see a prudent, fiscally-conservative budget that nonetheless supports two key B.C. priorities: skills development and infrastructure,” said John Winter, president and CEO of the BC Chamber.

Winter commended the budget’s focus on skills training, including measures to better match young workers with the skills needs of business and the creation of the Canada Apprentice Loan to encourage trades training.

“We applaud the federal government for its efforts to tackle Canada’s skills gap,” Winter said. “We would, however, urge the government to continue to work hard to ensure the Canada Jobs Grant is palatable to businesses and the provinces, so that it achieves its goal of triggering new investment in training.”

The BC Chamber has made skills one of its priority areas and will continue to work closely with all tiers of government and B.C.’s business community to achieve progress on meeting B.C.’s skills gap.

The BC Chamber also welcomed continued focus on funding major infrastructure.

“Investing in infrastructure is key to our national economic growth,” Winter said. “We look forward to further details regarding the Building Canada Fund, which we trust will help fund B.C. infrastructure projects that fuel our province’s economic growth.”

Winter noted that there’s a strong link between the investment in core public infrastructure, such as roads, transit and utilities, and the productivity performance of all sectors of the Canadian economy. He added that the consequences of underinvestment are equally clear.

“The success and competitiveness of Canadian business depends on modern and efficient infrastructure,” he said.

The BC Chamber welcomed a series of budget measures that respond to Chamber network policies and advocacy work:

- **Trades and Training:** The creation of the Canada Apprentice Loan to help registered apprentices in Red Seal trades with the costs of training and the introduction of the Flexibility and Innovation in Apprenticeship Technical Training pilot project to expand the use of innovative approaches for apprentice technical training.
- **Job Matching:** The provision of \$11.8 million over two years and \$3.3 million per year ongoing to launch an enhanced Job Matching Service to ensure that Canadians are given the first chance at available jobs that match their skills in their local area.
- **New Funding for the LMO Process:** The investment of \$11 million over two years and \$3.5 million per year, ongoing, to strengthen the Labour Market Opinion process to ensure Canadians are given the first chance at available jobs.
- **Supporting the Economic Immigration System:** The provision of \$14 million over two years and \$4.7 million per year, ongoing, towards the successful implementation of an Expression of Interest economic immigration system to support Canada's labour market needs
- **Red Tape:** The reduction of tax compliance and regulatory burden for small and medium sized business.
- **Efficiency in Project Reviews:** The provision of \$28 million over two years to the National Energy Board for comprehensive and timely reviews of project applications to support the Participant Funding Program.
- **Supporting Economic Growth in Rural Communities:** Investing \$305 million over five years to extend and enhance broadband internet service for Canadians in rural and Northern communities.

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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