

NEWS RELEASE

Canada's Chambers call on feds to fix air access, TFW program

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vancouver, September 30, 2013 – Business leaders from across Canada are asking Ottawa to fix Canada's flawed Blue Skies policy and reverse damaging changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program.

At the Canadian Chamber of Commerce AGM, which wraps up today, delegates from across Canada backed these two critical policies from the BC Chamber of Commerce and its network of local Chambers.

“Canada's business community has come together to say: ‘Mr. Harper, Canada's restrictive air policy and gutted Temporary Foreign Worker program are hurting Canada's businesses,’” said John Winter, president and CEO of the BC Chamber.

Winter added, “When Canada's business community, from coast to coast to coast, calls for change, you know these issues matter.”

Winter explained that, on the air access issue, Canada's Blue Skies policy doesn't go far enough to enable B.C. – and Canada more broadly – to tap into the global marketplace. See the BC Chamber's policy [here](#) (PDF); the policy passed with strong support from Chambers across Canada.

“From B.C.'s perspective, with an export-oriented economy and a big tourism industry, we need a more competitive air policy to allow both goods and people to travel at competitive prices,” Winter said. “But this isn't just a B.C. issue. When Chambers across the country backed our policy, it was clear that businesses across Canada want progress on air access.”

On the TFW issue, Winter said that key B.C. industries from construction to tourism to the digital industries rely heavily on the TFW program to hire skillsets that aren't available locally.

“Program changes announced in April are already hitting B.C. companies, causing hiring delays, and making the program unusable for many small businesses,” Winter said. “When business leaders from across Canada backed our policy, it confirmed that Canada as a whole is feeling this fallout as well.”

See the BC Chamber's TFW policy [here](#) (PDF); the policy also passed.

Winter said that policies endorsed by the Canadian Chamber AGM send a strong and clear message to government.

“The national Chamber movement represents Canada’s largest, most diverse and most community-based business voice,” he said. “When Chambers across Canada join together to call for policy change, we’re saying to Ottawa, ‘Canada's business community is urging this change so that our country can move forward.’”

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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