
NEWS RELEASE

BC CHAMBER FOCUSES ON THE NEED FOR REFORM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vancouver, May 31, 2010 - Business leaders representing Chambers of Commerce from across BC gathered in Vancouver May 27-29th for the BC Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting & Conference and endorsed a motion for the BC Chamber to instruct the government that reform of local government is a priority for the business community.

"The business communities from across the province have sent a clear message. While many local governments have developed good relationships with their business community and are proactive in developing an open for business approach to their local economies, there are still many local governments who fail to realize who employs their tax paying residents, and that as a consequence, they represent the single largest impediment to economic growth and a vibrant and prosperous community," states John Winter, President and CEO of the BC Chamber of Commerce. "Given that local government's powers and tax raising ability are granted by provincial legislation, our members are calling on the province to be active in addressing our concerns and ensuring that local governments have the resources to provide the services they are required to provide.

One of the recommendations endorsed by BC Chamber Delegates was to reissue our call for the re-introduction of the business vote. As such, the Chamber was disappointed to see that the Local Government Elections Task Force report recommended not to introduce the corporate vote. (http://www.localelectiontaskforce.gov.bc.ca/taskforce_report.html)

"The decision to oppose the business vote by UBCM, and the subsequent recommendations in the Task Force report is disappointing and somewhat surprising given that many local governments approved resolutions in 2009 calling for its re-introduction," continues Winter. "Our members will see UBCM's hard-line position on this as disappointing but will welcome the recognition in the report that there is a problem with property tax for all business owners. We will be following up with the province on how we take this recommendation forward.

The BC Chamber of Commerce is the largest and broadest based business organization representing over 30,000 businesses of all classes of business owners.

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