

Fredericton Chamber Provides Minister Higgs with Pre-Budget Brief

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(Fredericton, NB) – On January 6th, 2014, the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce submitted a pre-budget brief to New Brunswick’s Finance Minister, Blaine Higgs (attached). Approved by its board of directors, the document was authored by the chamber’s Provincial Government Affairs Committee over the previous several months. Both of these groups represent a broad cross-section of the Fredericton chamber membership.

The brief urges the government to avoid a traditional ‘election budget,’ where fiscal prudence is shunted for spending on items with strategic popular appeal. New Brunswick’s debt and 2013 deficit of \$1.4 million per day is unsustainable and affects the Province’s ability to provide services, maintain infrastructure and focus on creating economic conditions to positively impact business.

“This document represents a true collaborative effort,” stated Krista Ross, CEO of the Fredericton chamber. “Our Provincial Government Affairs Committee worked on the document throughout the fall, using their own knowledge from a variety of sectors as well as the results of our annual membership survey. Our board of directors then provided their input on the document and ultimately approved its final version for submission to Minister Higgs.”

The brief focused on reducing the province’s debt and deficit through a combination of strategic investment in areas that will grow the economy and fiscal restraint, including continuing to find efficiencies within government.

“New Brunswick has a huge debt problem,” said Joseph O’Donnell, co-chair of the Provincial Government Affairs Committee. “As the Auditor General has continued to point out, New Brunswick’s debt and deficit is unsustainable and will ultimately lead to an inability to fund provincial operations and provide services to its citizens.”

“Obviously, as a chamber of commerce document, the primary focus is on creating favourable business conditions,” added Cathy Pugh, the committee’s other co-chair. “But ultimately, a successful business climate is what is going to produce the revenue that the province needs to function and serve all New Brunswickers. Continuing to rely on federal transfer payments for 40% of our budget is not something that can continue indefinitely.”

The full brief can be found on the chamber website at www.frederictonchamber.ca/chamber-documents.

With more than 900 members, the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce is one of Atlantic Canada’s largest chambers of commerce. A dynamic business organization, the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce is actively engaged in policy development that affects the competitiveness of our members and of the Canadian business environment.

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