



Media Advisory
April 15, 2008

The Chamber applauds today's Speech from the Throne

Calgary, AB – The Calgary Chamber of Commerce is pleased to see that today's throne speech has major initiatives in at least four of our five 2008 Members' Priority Areas. These initiatives speak to labour shortages, transportation and infrastructure, economic diversification, and the environment.

"Research tax credits, an enterprise fund, TILMA, and initiatives to strategically increase participation in the labour force are critical, and will maintain Alberta's advantage as an economic leader," says Heather Douglas, President and CEO, Calgary Chamber of Commerce. "We are therefore pleased to see them as top priorities for our provincial government."

The Chamber additionally welcomes the Premiers Council on Economic Strategy, and with its long-standing experience and members' expertise to contribute, would be thrilled to have a seat at the table, to advise the government on forward-looking economic policy.

Second, the Chamber is encouraged to see the governments' plans toward a provincial energy strategy that looks towards the future.

New initiatives in innovative technology research targeted at the development of traditional oil & gas reserves, and developing new alternative energy sources have long been advocated by the Calgary Chamber of Commerce.

"In our recent provincial budget submission, the Chamber called for a special purpose endowment for Research in Energy Futures Innovation and Technology (REFIT)," continues Douglas, "We look forward to working with the government to achieve this objective, and hope that the Throne Speech is a sign of something upcoming in the Budget."

Third, the Speech from the Throne speaks to Chamber Members' number one provincial issue - the sustainability of the health care system.

"The Chamber believes the time is right, and supports the governments' determination to improve access to quality health care –especially to improve the overall efficiency and cost-effectiveness of health care delivery in the province. In our recent Alberta Chambers Resolution, the Chamber submitted a number of ideas that would lead to the province creating a world-class health care system, while controlling costs. This can be achieved," says Douglas.

Chamber Members, however, are concerned that the elimination of health care premiums may provide a substantial challenge to deliver quality service in an environment of increasing costs. The Chamber looks forward to seeing the details of the government's implementation plan, and how the government plans to phase out premiums without raising taxes or compromising access and quality of services.



Finally, the Chamber is encouraged to see a commitment to increased supportive living accommodations and services, particularly for seniors. With the current demographic trend, the Chamber advises governments, both provincially and federally, to plan for an increased demand in this area. The Chamber recognizes that there will be an incredible potential cost to the economy if people have to start quitting or switching to part-time employment to care for aging parents due a shortage of seniors' facilities available.

About the Chamber:

The Calgary Chamber of Commerce is a volunteer driven, not-for-profit, and non-partisan advocacy group whose mission is to lead and serve the Calgary business community, valuing its diversity.

On critical and emerging issues in public policy, the Chamber acts as the leading forum for debate, and advocates public policy solutions that improve the business climate on behalf of our members.

- 30 -

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