

Tax and Economic Affairs Committee

Mandate

Our success in advocating for business-positive tax laws, and reductions to the regulatory burden that businesses face has made Calgary the leading engine for economic growth in the country. This committee's sought-after expertise on, and reaction to federal and provincial budgets makes it one of the Chamber's strongest players. It has also been effective in providing leadership and advocacy on competitive and 'Alberta Advantage' issues.

2008 – 2009 Committee Focus Areas

- Provincial, federal and municipal budget submissions and fiscal policy commentary
- Provincial savings framework
- Municipal finance policy reform
- Canadian Securities Regulation

Summary of Previous Year's Work

In November 2008, the Committee helped the Chamber develop the *Vision 2050 Savings Framework* for the province, which was the central component of the Chamber's 2009 provincial budget submission. Three resolutions adopted by the Alberta Chamber of Commerce at the 2009 AGM were derived from the Chamber's provincial pre-budget submission: *Vision 2050: a New Provincial Savings Framework*, *Improving Personal Tax Competitiveness*, and *Controlled Expenditures: A Smart Spending Bandwidth*.

The Committee also continued its tradition of commentary on the federal budget. In December 2008 the Committee helped the Chamber develop its 2009 federal budget submission – a synopsis of which was published in the widely distributed Canada West Foundation report entitled *Taking Action on the Economy: Advice from Western Canada*. In January 2009, the Committee provided advice to inform the Chamber's official position at the federal budget release, which was presented at a panel discussion hosted by the Chamber.

In late 2008, the City of Calgary released its contentious 2009 – 2011 Proposed Budget. This budget, complete with double-digit property tax increases, raised a great deal of anxiety amongst Calgarians, and prompted the Tax and Economic Affairs Committee to look deeper into the City's budgeting process. The Committee heard from speakers such as Alderman Gord Lowe, Naheed Nenshi of the Better Calgary Campaign, and Tracy McTaggart, Calgary's City Auditor to learn more on the file. As a result the Committee was well-positioned to advise and inform on the Chamber's 2009-11 municipal pre-budget submission.

The Committee reviewed and provided commentary to the Chamber regarding an Alberta Chamber of Commerce policy resolution on a national securities regulator, and heard from Bill Rice, Chair of the Alberta Securities Commission, in June 2009.

In addition to their regularly scheduled meetings, Committee members also held small group discussions with several prominent speakers such as Jack Mintz, Palmer Chair in Public Policy at the University of Calgary, and the Honourable Iris Evans, Alberta's Minister of Finance and Enterprise.

Committee Meeting Guest Speakers

Date	Speaker	Topic
October 2008	Alderman Gord Lowe, City of Calgary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Budget Process
November 2008	Naheed Nenshi, Mount Royal College, Better Calgary Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Budget Process
February 2009	Tracy McTaggart, City Auditor, City of Calgary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of the City Auditor
April 2009	The Hon. Iris Evans, Minister of Finance & Enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberta's Budget 2009
April 2009	Dr. Jack Mintz, Palmer Chair in Public Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open discussion with Committee members
June 2009	Bill Rice, Chairman, Alberta Securities Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Securities Regulator