



Calgary
Chamber



Edmonton
Chamber
of Commerce

MEDIA RELEASE

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Remove barriers to drive business growth, Edmonton and Calgary Chambers advise next Alberta government

CALGARY, EDMONTON – Alberta’s next government must act immediately to reduce business costs and regulatory burdens that are limiting economic growth and community prosperity, say Chambers of Commerce representing the province’s two largest cities.

The Calgary and Edmonton Chambers are aligning advocacy efforts during the 2019 Alberta Election and urging all parties to spell out how they will establish trust with the business community and build a business environment that will support market and job growth.

“Both cities offer what should be among the greatest places in North America to operate a thriving business,” said Sandip Lalli, President and CEO of the Calgary Chamber. “Businesses want to grow, however our competitive advantages continue to be challenged by layered costs from increased taxes, fees and expensive new regulations from all levels of government.”

Edmonton Chamber President and CEO Janet Riopel said the impacts of the rushed increase to the minimum wage, higher corporate taxes, the introduction of a carbon tax and new employment standards and labour code changes have impacted competitiveness and resulted in business closures and job losses.

“Many Edmonton businesses have been pushed to the breaking point,” said Riopel. “While economic forecasters and politicians keep saying the economic downturn is behind us, sadly that is not what we are hearing from our members. We talk to business owners and operators every day and they tell us that the struggle continues.”

As a result, households are struggling to find work, pay rent and mortgages, and maintain a quality of life they have worked hard to achieve, said Lalli.

“Once known as a province where risks were often rewarded, many investors now see Alberta as too risky,” said Lalli. “As a result, companies are investing outside of Alberta, capital budgets are shrinking and sadly, businesses are closing, and people are losing their jobs.

“But there is a path forward, there are opportunities to invest in Alberta, and with a more certain and competitive cost and policy environment both cities are ready to get moving and get moving quickly.”

“The business community is watching and analyzing the platform positions of each party. We need to understand how the next government will boost our competitiveness and grow our economy,” added Riopel.

Policy recommendations from the Calgary Chamber can be found [here](#) and the full platform can be found [here](#). The Edmonton Chamber’s platform can be found [here](#).

See attached backgrounder: Recommendations to reduce costs and regulatory burden on business from the Edmonton and Calgary Chambers

To schedule an interview with the Calgary Chamber, please contact Gina Scandrett, Communications Specialist, at media@calgarychamber.com or at (403) 750 0401.

ABOUT THE CALGARY CHAMBER

The Calgary Chamber is an independent non-profit, non-partisan business organization. For 128 years the Chamber has worked to build a business community that nourishes, powers and inspires the world.

To schedule an interview with the Edmonton Chamber, please contact Brent Francis, Director, Advocacy and Outreach, at bfrancis@edmontonchamber.com or at (780) 902 4551.

ABOUT THE EDMONTON CHAMBER

The Edmonton Chamber is the respected voice of business in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region. With over 2,000 member companies that employ over 100,000 people in our region, we are one of the largest chambers in Canada and among the most influential business organizations in the country. The Edmonton Chamber is non-partisan organization and we do not endorse any political party or any candidate seeking elected office.

Backgrounder: Recommendations to reduce costs and regulatory burden on business from the Edmonton and Calgary Chambers

Edmonton Chamber

1. The Province must enhance the competitiveness of Alberta businesses by addressing the ever-increasing taxes, fees and regulatory costs layered onto business from all orders of government. This should include:
 - a. Undertaking a full review of the effects of labour legislation changes on both businesses and workers, including the \$15 minimum wage, the revised Employment Standards Code and changes to the Labour Relations Code.
 - b. Exploring alternatives to the current “one-size-fits-all” minimum wage, including a possible trainee wage or a minimum compensation model that would account for employee benefits not entirely captured in the wage rate (i.e. post-secondary education and training, health insurance, matching RRSP programs, etc.).
 - c. Ensuring that any programs designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions do not undermine the competitiveness of Alberta businesses, and in fact bolster their ability to succeed in the global market.
 - d. Allowing large emitters to comply with the Climate Leadership Plan, in part, by purchasing verified carbon offsets on the global market.

Calgary Chamber

1. Implement “layered cost” economic impact assessments on provincial policy initiatives which also considers overlap, duplication and additional regulatory burden from all levels of government. As part of the regulatory review process the government should also look to reduce the overall regulatory burden by removing two regulations for every new one that is added on business.
2. Initiate a comprehensive review of Alberta’s corporate tax system within the first year of forming government. This should include:
 - a. Reducing the corporate tax rate.
 - b. Broadening and streamlining the Alberta Investor Tax Credit to include all sectors and making it a permanent part of the tax code.
3. Provide reasonable time for consultation before implementing new policies, with appropriate implementation timeframes for businesses and the marketplace to adjust.
4. Ensure climate policy promotes business competitiveness while also working to support innovative technologies and helping to achieve our environmental objectives.