

**CENTRE WELLINGTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TACKLE SKILLS GAP, TRANSFORM SERVICE DELIVERY**

**CENTRE WELLINGTON, March 25, 2013:** The Ontario Government needs to focus more on creating winning conditions for businesses, according to the Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC), who recently presented a pre-budget submission to the Province.

The 2013 submission advises government to take seven practical steps to help grow the provincial economy, including tackling the provincial deficit, exploring new ways of delivering public services, and investing in ways to export Ontario to the world.

Addressing the fiscal challenge remains businesses' top priority. "Our provincial debt is approaching \$300 billion," said Allan O'Dette, President & CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. "Interest payments on that debt represent the third highest area of program spending after health care and education."

"Government also needs to fundamentally re-evaluate its role as the province's default service provider," added O'Dette. "International experience tells us that you can shift service delivery to the private and not-for-profit sectors and create a cost-savings while improving service quality."

"The OCC has identified several areas of concern that directly affect businesses in Centre Wellington", notes Janet Harrop, President of the Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce. "The infrastructure gap, skills gap, and immigration policies have significant daily impact on our member's businesses."

Citing massive labour shortages, the submission also calls on the Ontario Government to let employers play a more prominent role in employment and training services. "It's shocking to find that 30% of employers in Central Ontario are having difficulty hiring someone with the right qualifications," said Harrop.

Members of the OCC were surveyed prior as part of the chambers' pre-budget submission. Highlights of the survey include:

- 76% of Ontario businesses believe that reducing the size of government should be a top priority
- 30% of employers have had difficulty hiring someone with the right qualifications
- 62% of Ontario businesses believe clamping down on the underground economy should be a top priority

We need to act collectively, strategically, and with purpose to ensure that the province remains the best place to live, work and raise a family.

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To read the full submission [click here](#).

For further information or to schedule an interview, contact:

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