



**MANITOBA
CHAMBERS OF
COMMERCE**

*Day of Advocacy at the Provincial
Legislature*

Thursday, November 29, 2018

List of Provincial Cabinet Participants and Government Officials

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| Honourable Brian Pallister, Premier of Manitoba | Honourable Blaine Pedersen, Minister of Growth Enterprise, and Trade | Honourable Ron Schuler, Minister of Infrastructure |
| Honourable Colleen Mayer, Minister of Crown Services | Honourable Scott Fielding, Minister of Finance | Honourable Ralph Eichler, Minister of Agriculture |
| Honourable Cliff Cullen, Minister of Justice and Attorney General | Honourable Cathy Cox, Minister of Sport, Culture, and Heritage | Honourable Eileen Clarke, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations |
| Ms. Jan Forster, Deputy Minister, Municipal Relations | | |

List of Provincial Leader Participants

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| <i>Mr. Wab Kinew, Leader of the Official Opposition, Leader, Manitoba NDP</i> | <i>Mr. Dougald Lamont, Leader, Manitoba Liberal Party</i> |
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List of Manitoba Chamber Network Participants

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| Chuck Davidson, President & CEO, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce | Cory Kolt, Director of Policy & Communications, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce | Paul Holden, Board Chair, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Board of Directors |
| Loren Remillard, President & CEO, Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce (TBC) | Cindy McDonald, Executive Director, Portage la Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce | Candace Olafson, Executive Director, Morden & District Chamber of Commerce |
| Carolynn Cancade, General Manager, Brandon Chamber of Commerce | Kristi Meek, Executive Director, Assiniboia Chamber of Commerce | Stephen Chychota, Executive Director, Dauphin Chamber of Commerce |
| Wayne Patram, Board Executive, Steinbach Chamber of Commerce | Jim Berscheid, President, The Pas and District Chamber of Commerce | Linda Markus, Board Executive, The Pas and District Chamber of Commerce |
| Colin Fast, Director of Policy, Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce | Marilyn Crewe, Neepawa Chamber of Commerce | |

Schedule (NOTE: All meetings will take place in room 54 except where noted)

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| 8:00 a.m. | Meet at Provincial Legislature |
| 9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. | Meeting with Honourable Brian Pallister, Premier of Manitoba (Cabinet Room) |
| 9:35 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. | Meeting with Ms. Jan Forster, Deputy Minister for Municipal Relations |
| 10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. | Meeting with Honourable Ron Schuler, Minister of Infrastructure |
| 11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Meeting with Honourable Collen Mayer, Minister of Crown Services Honourable Eileen Clarke, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations Honourable Cathy Cox, Minister of Sport, Culture, and Heritage Honourable Cameron Friesen, Minister of Health |
| 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Meeting with Honourable Blaine Pedersen, Minister of Growth, Enterprise, and Trade, Honourable Ralph Eichler, Minister of Agriculture, Honourable Scott Fielding, Minister of Finance |
| 12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. | Meeting with Honourable Cliff Cullen, Minister of Justice and Attorney General |
| 12:30 p.m. – 1:25 p.m. | Lunch (Location TBD) |
| 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. | Question Period (Gallery) |
| 3:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. | Meeting with Wab Kinew, NDP Leader |
| 3:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. | Meeting with Dougald Lamont, Liberal Leader |



Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Day of Advocacy

Manitoba Legislature

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Agenda

1. Opening comments from MCC President and CEO and background on our policy process, etc.
2. Discussion of current issues facing members:
 - a. Closing the competitiveness gap
 - i. Taxation
 - ii. Access to Capital
 - iii. Moving Manitoba Forward
 - b. Working to Improve our Workforce
 - i. Improved Labour Market Information
 - ii. Bring Business and Education Together
 - iii. Post-Secondary Funding
3. Open discussion from the Minister's to share their current agenda/areas of focus and possible identification of future working partnerships with chamber network.
4. Roundtable discussion with chamber representatives on issues and opportunities in their community
5. Final comments.

Welcome and thank you for taking part in the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce (MCC) first Chamber Day of Advocacy at the Manitoba Legislature. Throughout the day, MCC is pleased to bring chambers from across the network to the heart of the political engine in our province to meet with the men and women who make up the cabinet of the provincial government. In doing so, we hope we can all come together to discuss the crucial issues facing our communities and how we can work together for the betterment of Manitoba businesses and residents.

As our conversations develop throughout the day, our topics will focus on two key issues – **Economic Competitiveness** and **Workforce** – both critical to the long-term growth of Manitoba as we continue to position ourselves a province that is open for business. These two pillars of the advocacy development of MCC encompass a great deal of issues, but simply put, the competitive gap is real, and the lack of reliable data and the lack of depth of skilled labour remain a great concern to our organization and the businesses we represent. Despite the work already done by the provincial government, we must work aggressively to narrow the distance between Manitoba and other jurisdictions.

Today is yet another step in developing a long-term plan for growth and prosperity for Manitoba businesses and the viability of our communities. Vibrant communities build strong businesses, and those strong businesses build even stronger communities.

The Chamber is the Meeting Place for Ideas

The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, established in 1931, is the umbrella organization for Manitoba's Chamber movement. With a membership comprised of Local Chambers of Commerce as well direct Corporate Members, the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce is Manitoba's largest and most diverse business lobby, representing 70 Local Chambers and close to 10,000 businesses and community leaders.

Our vision is to make Manitoba the Best Place to Live and Work.

Our mission is to champion sustainable economic growth leading to greater prosperity for business and communities in Manitoba.

It's that vision and mission that we have for the province that drives our comments as we look to continue our work and relationship with the provincial government and grow our tourism sector.

Trust in the Process

A crucial component of the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Annual General Meeting is the opportunity it gives local chambers to put forward resolutions that identify the challenges facing Manitoba.

Resolutions are primarily submitted by local chambers, but may also be proposed by the Board or the Policy Committee. The submitted Resolutions are then discussed, possibly amended and then rejected or approved by local chambers during the Annual General Meeting.

Resolutions largely set the advocacy mandate for any given year. All resolutions are brought to the attention of appropriate government officials and other bodies to which the various recommendations are directed. The method of presentation may vary by resolution due to a number of factors, including timing; subsequent events and legislation which may affect the subject matter; or additional information that may become available.

Effective April 2014, each resolution has an effective lifespan of three years.

Areas Towards Growing Manitoba's Economy

While the government has made strides on a number of key metrics relevant to business – deficit reductions, red tape reduction, spending restraints, and minor tax relief and adjustments, we must continue to create a greater balance between cutting expenditures and growing the Manitoba economy.

In today's globally competitive business environment it is imperative that government create a climate that attracts new business and allows existing businesses to grow and thrive. For Manitoba to reach its full potential, there are seven key public policy pillars that Manitoba must address to demonstrate our collective commitment to "Growing Manitoba's Economy."

I. FISCAL COMPETITIVENESS

Manitoba must have an effective and fiscally prudent government committed to creating a competitive tax jurisdiction to attract and retain new investment.

II. VENTURE CAPITAL

Commitment to the creation of an accessible venture capital fund and supportive tax credit policies to leverage investment in the growth of new and existing businesses.

III. GLOBAL TRADE

Commitment to pursuing an expanded global trade profile for Manitoba which derives substantial economic benefit.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Commitment to a strategic, sustained, disciplined approach to investment in Manitoba's core infrastructure.

V. ABORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT

Commitment to the creation of an Aboriginal Engagement Strategy to ensure inclusion and partnership in economic growth policies.

VI. SKILLED WORKFORCE

Commitment to attracting, educating, training and retaining a skilled, responsive workforce is fundamental to ongoing economic growth.

VII. 'NEW FISCAL DEAL' FOR MUNICIPALITIES

Commitment to address the existing fiscal framework between the province and municipalities to meet the challenges of the future.

Closing the Competitiveness Gap

Over the last two decades, a sizeable gap had developed between Manitoba and other western jurisdictions. A variety of economic indicators show Manitoba still struggles in the areas of taxation, gross domestic product, and private capital investment, among others. In the most recent Manitoba Prosperity Report from the Manitoba Employees Council (MEC) 28 key indicators of economic prosperity were analyzed and then compared to the performance of our closest provincial neighbours – British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario. In 15 of 28 indicators, relative to the four provinces, Manitoba finished at the bottom. Manitoba finished second last in 6 of the 28 other indicators. In 21 of 28 indicators, Manitoba finished amongst the bottom two provinces.

As mentioned above, this government's focus on reshaping the economy and addressing the growing deficit and putting an impetus on the business community to do their share to help drive the economy should be recognized and is applauded by our organization. However, there are some critical areas where the government can improve the fortunes business. The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce have three key recommendations that we feel will refocus the conversation.

Recommendations

1. Taxation

The Manitoba Chamber of Commerce believes that for Manitoba to achieve the level of prosperity needed to take the Manitoba economy to the next level the provincial government needs to increase its focus in the budgeting process to ensure economic growth is the driving force behind decisions that are made and that decisions that are made are viewed through the lens of making Manitoba more competitive.

- ***The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce ask the provincial government to commit to a full review of the tax structure (both personal and corporate) in Manitoba, focused on examining:***
 - ***Implementation of long-term provincial strategies to provide the business community with confidence and certainty that tax reduction is a priority.***

2. Access to Capital

One of the biggest challenges facing entrepreneurs and businesses in Manitoba is the availability of capital to grow and expand their business. Access to capital, including limitations to existing Manitoba grant opportunities, has been identified by a number of industries and entrepreneurs as a critical issue holding their business back from growing. Difficulties in accessing capital are hindering the full potential of Manitoba's business community and the economy overall.

- ***The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce strongly encourage the provincial government to establish a comprehensive access to capital strategy that identifies all stages of capital financing, current capital availability and local gaps along with the entire capital gamut (idea incubators, venture capital funds, etc.) and provincial initiatives to address the deficiencies.***

3. Moving Strategies Forward

Since taking office in April 2016, the provincial government has committed significant resources to a series of deep-dive studies into a variety of critical issues, including Northern economic development and tourism. However, once these reports see the light of day, the real work begins to implement their recommendations. These reports contain the blueprint for growth and need to be more than a one and done.

- ***The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce ask the provincial government to commit to providing the support, resources, and development of sustained plans to ensure the effective implementation of the Economic Development Strategy, Provincial Tourism Strategy and the Look North report.***

Working to Improve Our Workforce

It makes little difference what community MCC visits or which industry we talk to. The common connection is their constant concern over workforce issues across the province. Whether it's skilled labour, transition of skills of new immigrants, or identifying the in-demand jobs of the future, workforce remains the number one worry of business. The latest projections from the province indicate the Manitoba economy will see a total of 168,700 job openings between 2018 and 2024, with 66 per cent of these openings to replace worker retirements and deaths. The forecasts predict approximately 24,100 total job openings per year.

The business community across Manitoba, more critically in the north, is currently experiencing challenges hiring skilled labour and the expectation is that labour pools will become more strained in the next decade. How does Manitoba reach these expectations? No matter how you answer that question, the critical issue of are we in the best position to meet these demands pops up. To ensure we are asking the right questions, the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce sees the following three-tiered recommendations as critical to ensuring we are providing our businesses and educational systems with the best and accurate tools to meet the growing demands.

Recommendations

1. Improved Labour Market Information

Currently, Manitoba is operating in a data vacuum, and insufficient labour market information (LMI) is limiting sufficient funding, policy making, as well as program design and delivery. A primary concern for Manitoba business is the lack of available local and occupational level LMI.

There are significant gaps in information on job vacancies across the province; currently, data can demonstrate when a province is experiencing shortages but not precisely where labour is needed within regions or what specific skills are in demand.

- ***The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce ask the provincial government to commit to addressing the enhancement of LMI through interprovincial collaboration and to consider the establishment of a cross-ministry led committee to improve collection and coordination of timely and accurate LMI efforts.***

2. Bring Business and Education Together

The adage of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing is relevant to the relationship, or lack of relationship between business and education. For LMI to be used properly, there needs to be buy-in from business to share and make their data available to develop a better sense of where the needs are. Once the requirements are defined and understood, education programs can have a better and timely understanding of the programs that need to be developed to educate for specific labour needs. Many would argue current training programs do not address the gaps in the labour market. Collaboration between business, education, and the government are needed to address deficiencies in the quality and sharing of information and better planning to discuss skilled labour training.

- ***The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce ask the provincial government to commit to working with business and education sectors on a strategy to establish a new framework to better identify the needs of business and the development of education programs to meet the growing demand for future employment.***

3. Post-Secondary Funding

Businesses across the province have encountered missed or delayed opportunities due to a lack of available skilled workers. Given the nature of the current labour market needs, most often, post-secondary and technical colleges are the institution's businesses looks to deliver the required training for in-demand jobs. Post-secondary and college institutions need to be equipped with tools to respond quickly to the labour market needs to address skilled labour shortages when identified. The current funding environment does not provide institutions with the ability to fund training programs quickly and responsively as opportunities arise.

The agility and responsiveness of post-secondary for skills training opportunities must make strides to match the pace of businesses.

Incremental unrestricted funding would allow educational institutions to address the most pressing labour market needs and deliver the necessary training.

This, in turn, will enable businesses to be more competitive in regional and national markets while helping individuals to obtain skilled employment at higher wages.

- ***The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce ask the provincial government to provide incremental, unrestricted funding, that can be used at the discretion of Manitoba's post-secondary and colleges for single or short-term program offerings in response to identified labour market demand in support of economic growth; and***
- ***Work with institutions to establish set criteria that will be used to evaluate each training opportunity to ensure compliance with the expectations for this unrestricted funding.***

Final Thoughts

Growing the economy is the priority, and we all have a role to play in that happening. The government must be focused on providing the foundation for business to prosper and industry must be ready to build on that foundation. Addressing the issues of economic competitiveness and workforce is an important step to build the confidence of businesses and citizens.

There are no easy fixes to the challenges facing business, education, or government. However, the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce and our network remain committed to working with government officials to take the tough, but needed steps, towards building a prosperous future for all Manitobans.