



# **POLICY RESOLUTIONS**

UPDATED MAY 2023



## Resolutions and Strategic Directions

Policy development is at the heart of the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce (MCC). Policy resolutions play a key role in preserving MCC's grassroots nature as they depend upon the contributions and the will of the local Chambers.

Interestingly, for all the diversity of MCCs membership, the Chamber movement has demonstrated an amazing consistency among the elements of its policy structure. In fact, the core values, strategic directions, and positions on emerging issues often lead to new resolutions. The policy structure addresses members' immediate and short-term needs through resolutions, and long-term challenges through Strategic Directions. This process is both responsive and proactive.

- Our local Chambers primarily submit resolutions, but MCCs Board of Directors and/or Policy Committee may also submit resolutions. The Policy Committee discusses and debates resolutions, sometimes making amendments to the substance of the preamble or resolutions, and then put them forward for review by local Chambers at MCCs Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be rejected or approved.
- Each resolution has an effective lifespan of three (3) years\*. In 2014, MCC enacted this by-law change at our AGM to better align with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce policy process. The three-year lifespan addresses the fact that the issues brought forward are complex and require substantial work over a longer period.
- Resolutions largely set the advocacy mandate for any given year. The MCCs goal is to bring resolutions to the attention of appropriate government officials and other bodies who may consider recommendations. 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 becomes available.

Our local Chambers have accepted the resolutions that make up this book, and these statements help guide our continued vision to grow Manitoba and make it a better place to call home. As we continue to grow the Chamber network, it is important that all local Chambers have access to our policy resolutions and the ability to share these advocacy statements with their Boards and local membership. We are proud to act on behalf of our Chambers and corporate members as "The Voice of Business" in Manitoba.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chuck Davidson'.

Chuck Davidson, President & CEO, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce

*\*Due to the impact of the pandemic in 2020, MCC opted to conduct only the required business meeting portion of the AGM and paused on all policy debate/renewals until May 2021. As a result, any policies which were up for renewal in 2020 (as well as all new policies put forward in 2020 prior to the decision) were advanced to 2021, meaning we are now one year behind on all policy renewals.*



## MISSION

The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce strives to champion sustainable economic growth leading to greater prosperity for business and communities in Manitoba.

## VISION

The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce aims to make Manitoba the best place to live and work.

## CORE FUNCTIONS

MCC pursues its mission through its involvement in two core functions:

***I. Advocacy & policy development***

- MCC serves as the collective unified voice– promoting and protecting the interests of businesses of all sizes, in all sectors and communities across the province – “The Voice of Business in Manitoba”

***II. Programs and services that promote business member prosperity and enhance the Chamber network***

- MCC keeps members informed through its communications and events
- MCC creates opportunities for business/Chamber connections
- MCC is a broker for affinity programs that reduce member business costs
- MCC promotes training and education programs to members

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## Core Municipal Infrastructure (MBPR-002)

### ***Issue***

A common ground, principle-based Manitoba solution with which to invest in core municipal infrastructure which includes trade and transportation assets, in the broader context of funding municipal infrastructure in a sustained manner, is required to support growth and prosperity throughout Manitoba.

A well-funded and maintained, seamless multi-modal transportation system in Manitoba ensures the ability to attract new areas of economic growth and sustain and/or enhance existing economic activity. Implicit in its mandate is recognition that without core municipal infrastructure including a transportation plan each of which is strategically and permanently funded, we place our economic stability and our social well-being at risk.

Infrastructure is not of passing interest or unimportant to our collective progress. It enables and underpins our economy, and therefore, quality of life. Investment in infrastructure, including a focus on trade enabling and supporting transportation systems on a permanent basis, is our economic and social healthcare program.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-002)***

**That the provincial government, in partnership with municipal governments and the private sector, establishes a core municipal infrastructure plan that:**

- **Is permanent yet flexible, not unlike our 'permanent' investment in healthcare, education, recreation, public safety, and the like;**
- **Invests in a sustained and strategic manner in assets which enable, create and open new opportunities for economic growth, without ignoring, maintaining, or rehabilitating key assets that already enable economic activity;**
- **Embraces environmentally sustainable practices and innovation through the use new products and practices, including award consideration based upon sustainability, innovation and life cycle costing.**
- **Seeks partnerships with the private sector which is the engine of innovation, growth, jobs, prosperity, taxes, and revenues to government;**
- **Mandates, through legislation, dedicating revenue streams including growth based taxes to these purposes in a clear, transparent, transitional, and accountable manner; and,**
- **Legislates periodic transparent public reviews enabling experience-based improvements and adjustments for the future.**

*Submitted by The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce  
Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## Manitoba Budget Planning (MBPR-003)

### ***Issue***

If Manitoba is to achieve the level of prosperity needed to take the provincial economy to the next level, the government will need to increase its focus in the budgeting process to ensure economic growth is the driving force behind decision-making.

There are a number of key economic indicators that the provincial government should take into consideration during budget deliberations, asking itself whether those decisions positively influence the following economic indicators:

- GDP per capita
- Provincial government spending
- Debt indicators
- Labour force growth – public and private
- Average weekly wages
- Interprovincial migration
- Number of head offices in Manitoba
- Entrepreneurial intensity

If the provincial government is focused on increasing Manitoba's economic opportunities and prosperity, these indicators will be positively influenced.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-003)***

**That the provincial government focuses on the following economic indicators in the budgeting process to:**

- **Ensure Manitoba's GDP per capita is competitive with other Western provinces.**
- **Contain annual increases in program spending to two-to-three percent (in line with inflation plus population growth);**
- **Have Manitoba's annual spending as a percentage of GDP level among the top three most competitive when compared with other provinces;**
- **Ensure Manitoba's annual labour force growth is competitive with other Western provinces;**
- **Have Manitoba's weekly wage rates among the top five most competitive in comparison with other provinces;**
- **Annually have a positive interprovincial migration number.**

*Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*





## Provincial Government Spending (MBPR-007)

### *Issue*

In today's globally competitive business environment, it is imperative that government creates a climate that attracts new business and allows existing businesses to prosper. Various economic indicators have shown that Manitoba continually lags other provinces, whether in taxation levels, job growth, or average weekly earnings. While some improvements have been made in recent years, Manitoba continues to be outpaced by other provinces in the following key areas:

- GDP per capita
- Interprovincial migration
- Family taxes
- Total businesses
- Average weekly earnings
- Program expenses

To achieve a more economically competitive climate, tax relief is a key component, but the only way taxes can be reduced is through a combination of increased revenues and spending reductions.

Expenditure reduction should be a focus for the provincial government to create a more economically competitive environment. This must be a priority. Any provincial government spending policy should be based on four principles:

- Sustainability – Is the spending sustainable over a continued timeframe?
- Transparency & Simplicity – Spending should be structured so it can be understood by taxpayers and is inexpensive to administer.
- Accountability – The government must be publicly accountable to taxpayers for money raised and expended.
- Efficiency – Government spending should be done most efficiently and performance measures established.

### *Resolution (MBPR-007)*

**That the provincial government:**

- **Evaluates government expenditures for efficiencies and effectiveness, and establishes a Commission on Efficiencies that will engage the public in determining if provincial services are being provided in the most cost-effective and efficient manner.**
- **Accepts and implements LEAN principles that would help create a culture in the public sector that inspires and rewards employees for finding efficiencies.**
- **Sets a target of having Manitoba's annual spending as a percentage of GDP be among the most competitive when compared to other provinces.**

*Submitted by MCC Policy Committee*

*Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2015*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, May 2018*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2022*



## Regional Infrastructure Development (MBPR-008)

### *Issue*

The infrastructure deficit in Manitoba is still growing despite efforts to add dollars to both Provincial and Municipal capital budgets.

Infrastructure development is an important economic engine for the province, perhaps most notably in its capital region (the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region) which includes 18 municipalities. With major industrial and logistical developments on the horizon in CentrePort Canada's designated area west of the International Airport, the timing is now. This region's infrastructure impacts the whole province as most export volume to the USA passes through the region, and most businesses in the province utilize resources from this dominant economic region of the province with a short-term view to the outcomes and long-term benefits.

Currently, there is a lack of coordination and cooperation in planning regional infrastructure that has impacted the priority setting of projects as well as resulting in unacceptable project delays, or projects not being supported at all. The existing regional and tri-partite funding models are valued financing mechanisms for supporting regional and community economic growth, but they only work if there is an earnest effort to cooperate and make timely investments in our regions.

### *Resolution (MBPR-008)*

**That the provincial government works to improve the integration and timely coordination of its regional infrastructure expenditures with municipalities, recognizing the benefits of improved communications to connect the entire province's infrastructure for a vibrant and sustainable economy.**

*Submitted by the Assiniboia Chamber of Commerce Government Relations Committee  
Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2015  
Renewed by Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, May 2018  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2022*



## Tackling Manitoba’s Economic Competitiveness through Taxation (MBPR-010)

### Issue

In today’s globally competitive business environment, the MCC believes it is imperative for government to create a climate that attracts new business and enables existing businesses to grow and thrive in Manitoba. Business leaders have made it clear that they don’t believe Manitoba’s business climate is competitive with other provinces. Regardless of who creates it, all tax policy must support the following three principles:

- Growth – The tax system should stimulate economic growth.
- Transparency – The tax system should be structured so that its intent can be clearly understood by the taxpayers and administered by authorities in an impartial and predictable manner.
- Accountability – The government must be publicly accountable to taxpayers for money raised and expended by it.

Manitoba continues to fall behind other provinces. As the demand for skilled workers grows, Manitoba must take a generational look at how we can compete with other provinces. The other provinces have capitalized on areas where they can make the biggest impact on attracting workers, and it has left Manitoba playing catchup. Currently, Manitoba falls behind our two closest provincial neighbours (Saskatchewan and Alberta) on basic tax thresholds.

### Provincial Income Tax Rates & Brackets for 2022 (KPMG LLP)

Manitoba		Saskatchewan		Alberta	
Rate (%)	Bracket (\$)	Rate (%)	Bracket (\$)	Rate (%)	Bracket (\$)
10.80%	Up to \$34,431	10.50%	Up to \$46,773	10%	Up to \$131,220
12.75%	\$34,432–\$74,416	12.50%	\$46,774 – \$133,638	12%	\$131,221– \$157,464
17.40%	\$74,417 and over	14.50%	\$133,639 and over	13%	\$157,465 – \$209,952
				14%	\$209,953 – \$314,928
				15%	\$314,929 and over

### Federal Income Tax Rates for 2022

- 15.00% - Up to \$50,197
- 20.50% - \$50,198– \$100,392
- 26.00% - \$100,393 – \$155,625
- 29.00% - \$155,626– \$221,708
- 33.00% - \$221,709 and over



### Basic Personal Exemption (BPE)

The Basic Personal Exemption (BPE) is the amount of income an individual can earn before they are subject to personal income tax. In 2001 Manitoba’s BPE of \$7,412 was the lowest among the provinces. While Manitoba’s BPE has increased to \$10,145 as of 2022, it remains one of the lowest among the provinces.

Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan in 2022:

Province	Basic Personal (\$)
MB*	\$10,145
AB	\$19,369
SK	\$16,615

Source: KPMG LLP

\*Only NS (\$8,481), and NF (\$9,803) have lower basic personal exemptions

### Corporate Tax

In 2000, Manitoba’s General Corporate Tax rate of 17 per cent was tied for highest with Saskatchewan. While Manitoba’s rate has fallen to the current level of 12 per cent, it remains tied for highest with Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

Interprovincial Comparison of Tax Rates (2021/2022)				
Corporate Income Tax (%)	BC	AB	SK	MB
Small	2	2	0/1	0
Large	12	8	12	12
Small Business Limit (\$000)	500	500	600	500

Source: Government of Canada 2021 Provincial Tax Rates

\*Saskatchewan has temporarily reduced the province’s small business income tax rate to 0% (from 2%) effective October 1, 2020 to June 30, 2022. The small business income tax rate will increase to 1% (from 0%) beginning July 1, 2022 and will be further increased to 2% (from 1%) beginning July 1, 2023.

### Payroll Tax

The Health and Post-Secondary Education Tax Levy, as it is known in Manitoba, is essentially a tax on a business’ payroll. Among the provinces, Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Manitoba charge a payroll tax. In Ontario, the *Employer Health Tax Act* requires every employer to pay tax on remuneration paid to its employees and former employees. Manitoba’s Health and Post-Secondary Education Levy exempts employers with total remuneration in a year of \$1.5 million or less. Payroll between \$1.5 million and \$3 million is taxed at 4.3%. Payroll of more than \$3 million is taxed at 2.15% of total payroll.



### ***Resolution (MBPR-010)***

That the provincial government commits to a provincial review of the tax structure (both personal and corporate), focused on examining:

- Implementation of long-term provincial strategies to provide the business community with confidence and certainty that tax reduction is a priority, and
- Setting a target of having Manitoba's tax levels and provincial tax threshold levels in the top three most competitive when compared with other provinces.

#### **Land Transfer Tax**

- Waive the Land Transfer Tax for first-time homebuyers and create a new system for calculating fees equal to the cost of the service.

#### **Corporate Tax**

- Index tax thresholds to inflation on an annual basis.
- Create a tax rate that is in the top three most competitive when compared with other provinces on a current basis (Manitoba is currently 5th).

#### **Personal Tax**

- Raise upper end of the bracket for the lowest personal income tax bracket to \$44,000.
- Raise the personal tax exemption to become more competitive with other provinces.
- Index brackets to be consistent with other provinces.

#### **Payroll Tax**

- Eliminate this tax over a five-year time frame through a threshold approach.

*Submitted by The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce  
Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2015  
Renewed by Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, May 2018  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2022*



## **PST Rebate for Municipalities (MBPR-019)**

### ***Issue***

Manitoba municipalities pay provincial sales tax (PST) and federal goods and services tax (GST) on the goods and services they purchase. While the federal government gives what municipalities spend in GST back in the form of a rebate, these local governments pay more than \$25 million to the provincial government in PST each year and are not rebated for this expenditure.

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) has repeatedly called on the Government of Manitoba to provide a provincial sales tax rebate to Manitoba Municipalities. Most recently, a Probe Research Poll commissioned by AMM confirmed that eight in ten Manitobans support this move. To that end, the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce submits that the Government of Manitoba should rebate PST dollars to municipalities, just as the federal government does with the GST.

PST monies could be reinvested into municipal projects to address concerns with aging infrastructure, community recreation, and other municipal priorities.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-019)***

**That the provincial government:**

- **Rebates the more than \$25 million in PST paid on an annual basis by Manitoba municipalities.**

*Submitted by Portage la Prairie Chamber of Commerce  
Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2016  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2019  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2023*



## Support for Expanding Canada's Pipeline Capacity (MBPR-022)

### *Issue*

As Canada transitions towards a cleaner economy and mobilizes plans to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, it is important to acknowledge that it will be impractical for Canada and the world to make a 180-degree pivot overnight. In the meantime, and perhaps thereafter, the world will need fossil fuels.

Canada currently lacks the infrastructure to be a serious international supplier of oil beyond the United States. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has renewed the resolve of Canadian energy proponents, who say the world needs Canada's brand of ethical oil, and the requisite infrastructure to export it.

In Canada, energy commodities support tens of thousands of direct, indirect, and induced jobs. In fact, the Canadian oil and gas industry employs 399,000 workers across the country. Despite pipeline project stalls and cancellations over the last several years, there continues to be an unprecedented opportunity for Canada's energy products to play an even greater role in the economy. The MCC asserts that Canadian pipeline projects would benefit the Canadian economy, by expanding pipeline infrastructure that will enable the country to move oil to lucrative Pacific Rim markets instead of selling at discounted prices to our one primary buyer -- the U.S. Midwest.

Pipeline projects, which are stalled or cancelled are concerning for the nation's economic growth and prosperity.

- In October 2017, TC Energy cancelled its 4,500-kilometre Energy East project, which proposed to carry 1.1 million barrels of crude oil per day from Alberta and Saskatchewan to refineries in Eastern Canada.
- The Trans Mountain Expansion Pipeline (TMX) project runs from Edmonton, Alberta, to the Westridge Marine Terminal and the Chevron refinery in Burnaby, British Columbia. TMX involves building a new pipeline along the existing route, which will increase the pipeline's capacity to 890,000 barrels per day from 300,000. The project also expands the Westridge Marine Terminal by adding two berths, increasing the number of tankers that the terminal can handle per month to 34 from five. TMX will follow existing rights of way for 89% of its 1,147-kilometre length. TMX met the test of a rigorous, scientifically sound review process and received all necessary regulatory approvals. Even so, the project stalled and this exposed fundamental flaws in the regulatory systems at all levels of government. Currently, the pipeline expansion project is under construction and is expected to be mechanically complete by the third quarter of 2023.
- On June 9, 2021, TC Energy cancelled its Keystone XL pipeline following a move by U.S. President Joe Biden in January to suspend an essential permit that would have allowed the company to build the pipeline across the U.S. border. The 2,000-kilometre route from Alberta to Nebraska was originally proposed in 2008 to transport Alberta oil to the United States.



## ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

Pipeline projects, including Energy East, TMX, and Keystone XL are rare nation-building opportunities that have the potential to create jobs and economic growth, and open new markets for Canada's oil. It is essential for the provincial and federal governments to present a unified, national voice, and for the Chamber Network to weigh in on this conversation because of its potential economic impacts.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-022)***

**That the provincial government works with the federal government to:**

- **Ensure any changes to our regulatory framework for resource development create clear, certain and predictable processes;**
- **Ensure that pipeline project proponents engage Chambers of Commerce and other organizations in project pipeline construction communities to maximize opportunities for local businesses during construction and operation of all major projects; and**
- **Prioritize genuine engagement and collaboration with Indigenous communities on oil and pipeline projects in Canada, focusing on shifting the balance of power between the Crown and Indigenous Peoples.**

Submitted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Policy Committee

Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2016

Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2019

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2023*





## Support Biotech in Agriculture (MBPR-023)

### *Issue*

Advancements such as biotechnology and in particular Genetic Engineering have enabled farmers to provide a safe, reliable, and economic source of food to Canadian consumers. This science has greatly increased crop yields, while dramatically decreasing the overall pesticide load associated with growing crops. It has also facilitated the widespread adoption of reduced or zero-tillage thereby significantly increasing soil and water quality while reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Manitoba's bio-economy industry generates over \$9.9 billion in revenue and employs over 14,000 people across the province. Ag Biotech is the largest sector in the Bioscience Industry within Manitoba and involves the research and study of digital agriculture, soil health, plant science and animal health and their application to farming in Manitoba and around the world.

As the world's population reaches 8 billion people, combined with concerns about food safety and climate change, sustainable agriculture is and will continue to be one of the world's most important industries. Manitoba is home to 38 life sciences research and development centres, including the Canadian Science Centre for Human and Animal Health, which is the only level 4 bio-containment lab in the country. Manitoba is ideally positioned to be a national leader in this area.

The industry is currently facing two significant challenges. First is the public's overall knowledge and perception of biotech and the need to expand career interest and investment in the industry.

The message being conveyed by activist groups to the public regarding Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) research and application is one of mistrust and fear, and not backed by scientific reality. This poses a significant threat to the agriculture industry and global food security in two ways:

- Farmers/producers, who represent less than 2% of the Canadian population, have difficulty in making their voices heard in society. Public opinion and sentiment play a huge role in shaping an industry. Food producers are continually stressed to keep up with demand from a growing population with a quickly rising middle class desiring more input-intensive food. Seventy-five years ago, one farmer made enough to feed 19 people. In 2010, that number rose to 155 people, due in large part to considerable leaps forward in technology.
- Urban dwellers and those removed from agriculture have difficulty gaining accurate information regarding how their food is grown and sufficient insight as to the vast complexities and technology advancements associated with modern agriculture. This has created a disconnect between the reality vs. perception of modern agriculture, especially when it comes to GMO crops. It is important that consumers understand how vital biotechnology is to farmers, to agriculture, to agribusiness, to consumers, and to the Canadian economy.

The second challenge is that across Canada there are projected to be 1,100 individuals, each year between 2022 and 2026, required to meet the existing demand in biotech, without any expansion. Factoring in expansion, this number is projected to double over the same timeframe. In Manitoba, about 25% of the population is in rural areas. Young people's career choices and decisions are based heavily on the types of work they see on a day-to-day basis. Manitoba has invested in post-secondary programs to support biotech development, but without a broader understanding of biotech as a career with young people in urban centers, we are not able to capitalize on these high paying jobs to support our agricultural economy.



## ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

The Governments of Manitoba and Canada fund strategic agricultural initiatives under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP), which includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and a \$2.5 billion commitment that is cost-shared 60 per cent federally and 40 per cent provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories. The Province of Manitoba announced a commitment to \$221 million (a 20% increase over the previous agreement) under the five-year program. The Sustainable CAP initiative is designed to deliver programs that support several priority areas, including:

- Building sector capacity, growth, and competitiveness
- Climate change and environment
- Science, research, and innovation
- Market development and trade
- Resiliency and public trust

It is imperative for the ongoing economic viability of the agriculture sector and the food security of our nation that the government continues to invest in the research and development and expansion of the biotech industry in the province.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-023)***

**That the provincial government:**

- **Identifies targeted funds through the Sustainable CAP, to develop a public awareness campaign related to the advances of the biotech industry in Manitoba and its positioning for the future;**
- **Identifies targeted funds through the Sustainable CAP, to develop an awareness campaign for high school students (Grades 9-12) related to career opportunities in biotech; and**
- **Continues to increase its investment in biotech to post-secondary institutions to expand research and development programs and to position them and the Province of Manitoba as centers of excellence in this field.**

*Submitted by the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Policy Committee*

*Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2016*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2019*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2023*



## Accelerating Foreign Direct Investment (MBPR-031)

### *Issue*

An increasingly restrictive and burdensome regulatory and tax environment is making Canada and Manitoba a less competitive destination for foreign direct investment (FDI), which is critical to innovation and diversification efforts.

The effects of globalization have reduced the need for foreign investment into Canada to access the Canadian market. At the same time, recent policy shifts at the federal level have layered-on costs that cumulatively further threaten Canada's attractiveness as an investment destination.

Over the last 20 years, Canada has had more Canadian direct investment abroad (CDIA) than there was a foreign direct investment (FDI) in Canada. According to various measures of openness to foreign investments, Canada does not rank favourably against many of its peers.

Studies have repeatedly documented that business innovation in Canada lags behind other developed countries. If Canada aims to increase its lagging productivity levels, significant new foreign capital will be required. Positive outcomes of FDI include a higher standard of living, increased levels of employment, higher paying jobs, greater innovation, access to larger and more diverse markets, and increased levels of trade. Indeed, strong trading relationships provide exposure to the Canadian market for foreign investors and provide a critical entry point for FDI. Federal, provincial, and territorial governments must carefully consider the policy decisions required to position Canada as the preferred destination to locate economic activity, and benchmark our attractiveness in this regard across sectors.

In the current era of globalization, Canada needs to move past its existing economic structure, centred on the supply of raw product, into higher value-added industrial and service sectors. This will require significant investment. It matters less where the money comes from than what is done with it. The critical metric is the country's ability to ensure that the operations of both foreign and domestic firms equally obey our laws and meet our standards and policy goals.

Under the Investment Canada Act, before any foreign investment over a certain threshold is approved Canada imposes a test of its 'net benefit' to Canada. Generally, for the direct, controlling acquisition of a Canadian business, the thresholds for transactions subject to review are \$5 million for direct investments and \$50 million for indirect transactions. However, the \$5 million thresholds will apply for an indirect acquisition if the asset value of the Canadian business being acquired exceeds 50% of the asset value of the global transaction.

In 2015, long-awaited amendments to the Investment Canada Regulations and the National Security Review of Investments Regulations were made. These amendments raised the key foreign investment review threshold and changed the valuation methodology from asset value to enterprise value for most transactions. Pursuant to subsections 14.1(1) and (2) of the Investment Canada Act, the review threshold for 2022 is \$1.141 billion in enterprise value for investments to directly acquire and control of a Canadian business by WTO investors that are not state-owned enterprises and by non-WTO investors that are not state-owned enterprises where the Canadian business that is the subject of the investment is, immediately prior to the implementation of the investment, controlled by a WTO investor.



## ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

In Canada the four sectors continue to be governed by the \$5 million and \$50 million thresholds, for all foreign investors. These are financial services, transportation, uranium, and cultural industries.

To determine an investment's 'net benefit,' the government looks to potential effects on employment, exports, and productivity.

In 2007, in response to a growing national debate over foreign takeovers, the federal government established the Competition Policy Review Panel. Its mandate included a review of Canadian foreign investment policies with the goal of making Canada more competitive in an increasingly global marketplace. Some of its key recommendations included:

- Amending the Investment Canada Act to reduce barriers to foreign investment by increasing review thresholds; reversing the onus to require the government to demonstrate that an investment would be contrary to the national interest before disallowing a transaction; increasing transparency and predictability; and preserving a distinct approach for the cultural sector while also initiating a broad review of Canada's cultural policies;
- Liberalizing investment restrictions in the Canadian air transport, uranium mining, and telecommunications and broadcasting sectors, and removing the de facto ban on mergers in the financial services sector;
- Updating and modernizing the Competition Act in line with best practices internationally;
- Creating a Canadian Competitiveness Council to give voice to and advocate for competition in Canada, and
- Ensuring sustained attention by governments on national competitiveness.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-031)***

**That the provincial government:**

- **Pursues a more targeted and aggressive global trade policy and market development strategy, developed in partnership with the business community, to secure access for Canada's goods and services, and secure a greater share of global foreign direct investment, which would stimulate economic growth, create jobs, and increase revenues for the government.**
- **Identifies the barriers to Foreign Direct Investment and works with the federal government to address them.**
- **Promotes Manitoba as a destination for foreign investment by highlighting our competitive advantages, including an educated workforce and strong international transportation networks.**

*Submitted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2018  
Renewed by Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, May 2022*



## Encouraging Business Growth for Local Breweries, Distilleries and Wineries (MBPR-045)

### **Issue**

Manitoba breweries, distilleries and wineries have production thresholds put on them that discourage economic growth and competitiveness. Although supporting local has been encouraged provincially across industries, the stores and liquor vendors that sell these products are not being held to this same standard and messaging.

### **Background**

Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries takes a markup on the products that are sold through stores and liquor vendors<sup>1</sup>, and it scales with production. Local wineries and distilleries in Manitoba are faced with the largest markup structure in Canada, where every other province has a minimum of 10x larger tiers<sup>2</sup>. Many distillers and wineries maintain a minimum level of production because they are swallowed by the fees upon growth. The desire to grow their production is there, but with the need for additional staff and sometimes larger buildings, the addition of elevated markups and percentages prevents any action to move forward.

When approaching local stores and liquor vendors on promotion of their products, local breweries, distilleries, and wineries are faced with standards that do not support the shop local initiative congruent with other Manitoba industries as vocalized by the Manitoba government. Inconsistent sampling fees, mark up percentages incomparable to other provinces, and the lack of supporting local have lent to the stifling of growth for Manitoba breweries, distilleries, and wineries.

### **Opportunity**

With the support of the provincial government in implementation of a markup structure more competitive to other Canadian provinces the opportunities for our existing breweries, distilleries, and wineries to grow increases. Additionally, this endorsed standard could foster the potential attraction of new businesses in these industries to Manitoba. The desirability of new businesses in the industry encourages job creation and economic growth, but also secures a reason to remain operating in Manitoba as each business reaches that next threshold of markup.

Secondly to include the liquor industry in the provincially communicated importance of supporting local, through the promotion of local breweries, distilleries and wineries products in store would signify to these businesses their importance and value in Manitoba's economy.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.mblpartners.ca/sites/mbl\\_b2b/files/pdf\\_pamphlets/MEMO%20-%20Changes%20to%20Freight%20and%20Exchange%20-%20April%2016%202022.pdf](https://www.mblpartners.ca/sites/mbl_b2b/files/pdf_pamphlets/MEMO%20-%20Changes%20to%20Freight%20and%20Exchange%20-%20April%2016%202022.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://aglc.ca/liquor/about-liquor-alberta/liquor-markup-rate-schedule> | <https://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/tax/st/index.html> | [https://www.wholesale.bcldb.com/sites/default/files/files/2020-11/External\\_Wholesale%20Pricing%20Guide\\_Effective%20JANUARY%202021.pdf](https://www.wholesale.bcldb.com/sites/default/files/files/2020-11/External_Wholesale%20Pricing%20Guide_Effective%20JANUARY%202021.pdf)



***Resolution (MBPR-045)***

That the provincial government:

- **Works with Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries to implement a new markup structure competitive and congruent with other Canadian Provinces for all local breweries, distilleries, and wineries to ensure the future of growth of this industry in Manitoba; and**
- **Prioritizes the dedicated local Manitoba products messaging and marketing space in each of the Manitoba Liquor stores and liquor vendor locations.**

*Submitted by Assiniboia Chambers of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2022*



## Development of a Volunteer-Business Credit Program for High School Students (MBPR-011)

### *Issue*

High schools serve an important role in developing a young student's interests that will help guide them down a career path to focus their post-secondary. Unfortunately, students are not getting proper exposure to a wide variety of skills required to help make these decisions at an early age. A number of programs, like Student-Initiated Projects (SIPs), Community Service SIPs, and Cultural Exploration SIPs exist to help students gain rudimentary training. These are student-driven initiatives, and there is debate as to how driven a school is to guide and encourage participation.

An SIP is a project initiated by a student in an area of special interest not provided in the Senior Years curriculum. Part of the problem is waiting until the senior year to narrow that level of focus. This is a missed opportunity for students and the business community. Providing a focused high school course (starting in Grade 10, 11 and 12) and attaching real value in obtaining credits towards graduation, while exposing students to potential career opportunities, learning the pace in which businesses work, and encouraging a healthy work ethic, could give them a more complete list of choices when deciding what to pursue in a post-secondary institution. The end goal, to encourage students, would be to attach credit availability based on the level of engagement through volunteered hours.

With an increased demand for students to fill the upcoming workforce gap, we must provide them with choices by opening up avenues to what lies ahead, and give them a better sense of self and ability to pursue their goals and dreams.

### *Resolution (MBPR-011)*

**That the provincial government:**

- **Actively promotes SIPs in all school divisions within Manitoba;**
- **Adjusts the SIP model to encourage student participation through the number of credits obtainable via the program;**
- **Identifies allies and works with stakeholders and school divisions to implement this with credits going towards graduation, for student volunteer work in the business community.**

*Submitted by the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Workforce Committee*

*Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2016*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2019*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2023*



## Alignment Between Industry and Post-Secondary (MBPR-013)

### *Issue*

Manitoba's labour market is expected to be balanced over the next five years, meaning that the supply of labour will be adequate to meet labour demand. However, skills mismatches between workers and available jobs will likely lead to significant shortages in specific occupations. Significant shortages of workers are expected for those with no post-secondary training in education, business, management, marketing, and related support services, and in health professions and related programs. Many occupations are expected to face labour shortages over this time period, led by truck drivers, retail and wholesale trade managers and registered nurses.

Manitoba's Labour Market Outlook for 2022–2026 identifies expected trends for the province's labour market based on an occupation forecasting model that projects the number of openings in individual jobs and industry sectors, as well as the number of workers available to fill those jobs. This outlook allows us to understand the state of the Manitoba labour market and key issues involved in achieving future labour market goals for both individuals and Manitoba businesses.

Manitoba's post-secondary institutions train tomorrow's leaders and innovators and equip them with advanced skills that can be used on the job. However, given Manitoba's unique labour market needs, and a labour market outlook forecasting considerable labour gaps for certain occupations, there must be a focus on better alignment between the talent that industry needs and the talent that post-secondary institutions produce.

According to the Labour Market Outlook for 2022-2026, there will be 114,300 job opening over the next five years, where 56% of job openings will require formal post-secondary training. The concern is that Manitoba's post-secondary system is not currently producing the number of graduates that are needed in those industries with labour market gaps, which will hinder Manitoba's economic growth potential as jobs go unfilled and employers continue struggling to find the talent needed to compete and win in a rapidly changing environment.

Over the next five years, there are projected to be 75,800 job openings in Winnipeg, 12,900 openings in Southeastern Manitoba, 10,900 openings in North Central and South-Central Manitoba, 7,200 openings in southwestern Manitoba, 3,900 openings in the Interlake, and 2,200 openings in Parkland and Northern Manitoba. Several measures are needed to address these issues.





***Resolution (MBPR-013)***

That the provincial government fosters a tighter alignment between post-secondary and employers by:

- Working with employers and post-secondary institutions to accelerate industry-education partnerships by incentivizing and supporting research and development partnerships;
- Working with employers and post-secondary institutions to create a work-integrated learning program with the goal of providing on-the-job learning opportunities for all post-secondary students as part of their course of study; and,
- Working with employers and post-secondary institutions to develop a forward-looking labour market tool that recognizes the unique regional needs of employers and then providing this information to prospective students along with clear information about education programs, costs, average time to completion, and employment rates.

*Submitted by the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Workforce Committee*

*Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2016*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2019*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2023*



## Flexible Provincial Funding for Manitoba Colleges (MBPR-015)

### *Issue*

There are many businesses in Manitoba that are unable to find enough employees with the right skill sets. In surveys by the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, members consistently cite labour and skills shortages as key challenges. This situation places barriers on economic growth.

Manitoba Economic Development, Investment and Trade estimates that between 2018 and 2024, for jobs openings that require a post-secondary education, 60% will require credentials one would typically earn from a college versus 40% from a university. Yet, 75% of funded provincial seats are at the province's universities.

Alumni follow up surveys from colleges, such as Assiniboine Community College and Red River Polytechnic consistently show that graduates get jobs, work in their fields of study, and tend to stay in Manitoba after graduation. Across the country, colleges have generally been commended for their ability to respond quickly to changes, opportunities, and challenges in the labour market.

However, in Manitoba red tape currently acts as an impediment to rapid response by colleges to industry needs. These impediments take two major forms:

- No dedicated funding provided to colleges to support rapid response; and
- Cumbersome bureaucratic process which delay any potential response.

We need to equip our post-secondary institutions with tools to respond quickly to labour market needs to address skill and labour gaps when identified.

This situation is particularly acute in rural areas. The agility and responsiveness of colleges for skills training opportunities must make strides to match the pace of businesses. Incremental funding for rapid response including both short programs (those under 16 weeks) and longer programs (up to 2 years) would allow educational institutions to address the most pressing labour market needs and deliver the necessary training.

Each college should have a set number of resources under its own control to be able to respond immediately to opportunities as they emerge.

This would allow businesses to be more competitive while helping individuals to obtain meaningful employment at competitive wages.



***Resolution (MBPR-015)***

That the Provincial Government:

- **Provides incremental unrestricted funding that can be used at the discretion of Manitoba colleges for the purposes of single or short-term program offerings in response to identified labour market demands in support of economic growth;**
- **Along with key industry stakeholders, reviews the effectiveness of this funding after three years; and**
- **Works with Manitoba colleges to establish set criteria that will be used to evaluate each training opportunity to ensure compliance with the expectations for this unrestricted funding.**

*Submitted by The Brandon Chamber of Commerce*

*Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2016*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2019*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2023*



## Strengthening Labour Market Information (LMI) for Business Competitiveness (MBPR-030)

### *Issue*

Labour Market information (LMI) is valuable information, especially reflecting the ever-changing modern labour market demands. Amid the pandemic, LMI can give us important information on how the economy is recovering and adapting to a new normal. Insufficient labour market information (LMI) limits effective funding, policy-making, as well as program design and delivery.

A primary concern for Manitoba business leaders 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 which specific skills are in demand. In Don Drummond's 2014 report on LMI, he cites that one of the biggest challenges is that labour market survey results are often only available on a provincial basis and are aggregated into a small number of industries, masking dissimilarities between individual occupations.

It is essential for Manitoba to advocate for better and more localized information. The more information gathered and available to individuals, the better career decisions they can make. The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce will be implementing in 2021 a customer insights platform to distribute surveys to businesses throughout the province. This will allow the collection of important labour market information that is relevant, up to date, and accurate including wage, salary, gaps in labour supply, regional data, and demand. In addition, most provincial chamber organizations across Canada (other than one) have signed on to use this application, enabling us to collate data and serve as an excellent source of LMI nationally.

To circulate labour market information, Manitoba might benefit from British Columbia and its WorkBC website; the site contains a list of job openings across the province, analysis of the provincial labour market, and the results of employment surveys among post-secondary education graduates (including information on where jobs are in demand).

BC also has a distinct strategy of partnerships and active networks across the province to improve coordination of LMI including a cross-ministry LMI roundtable committee bringing together various ministries involved in LMI. The work of this committee has allowed for strengthened provincial provision and dissemination of LMI.

Beyond a lack of internal collaboration in the province, there is insufficient intergovernmental coordination and sharing of information between the provincial and federal governments. The timeliness of data would be enhanced if provincial and federal governments were willing to extract LMI from the wealth of data already collected from Canadians for other purposes while ensuring the



protection of private information. This includes evidence from income tax, employment insurance (EI) and social assistance purposes.

Provinces do not have access to postal codes and National Occupational Classification (NOC) codes for EI recipients. This type of information regarding which regions and occupations are experiencing changes in employment would allow Manitoba to build more responsive training programs.

The other key component is the buy-in from business to share and make their data available to develop a better sense of where the needs are. As it stands, the ability to get access to this information is simply not there. Whether it is a lack of trust from business or a lack of incentive to share the information, the infrastructure and information already exist, but we must determine who is doing it well so it can be replicated.

Labour market policies and programs also suffer from a lack of standard performance measures linked to employment outcomes. Based on existing metrics, it's difficult to evaluate program effectiveness. Collaboration between business and government is needed to establish a new framework to address deficiencies in the quality and sharing of information and to strive to adopt a standard set of performance measures that can be applied to all future-funded employment services.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-030)***

**That the provincial government:**

- **Works with business and education sectors on a strategy to establish a new governance framework to address deficiencies in the quality and sharing of LMI and one that aims to create a set of standard performance measures for program evaluation;**
- **Uses LMI to better focus towards targeting of students and market-ready individuals, and new immigrants;**
- **Works with school boards to develop communication products that outline education and career paths for students;**
- **Promotes existing LMI more actively and enhance public awareness of what is available;**
- **Enhances interprovincial collaboration on LMI and considers the establishment of a cross-ministry committee to improve coordination on LMI efforts.**

*Submitted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## Enhancing Provincial Data Collection (MBPR-032)

### *Issue*

The various kinds of census data gathered by Statistics Canada are used by all levels of government in a variety of ways, including program development and delivery, the assessment of infrastructure needs, and the tracking of broader demographic and economic trends.

Good government planning should be based on accurate, up-to-date, and detailed information about relevant jurisdictions. Statistical information, which serves as the basis for creating planning forecasts, is also essential to the democratic process since it enables citizens to examine the decisions made by provincial and federal governments, as well as those made by local authorities, and then decide whether those entities are adequately serving the public.

Businesses and other organizations also use census data when developing expansion plans, training and hiring employees, and analyzing the various traits of customers and stakeholders. Since Statistics Canada is a federal agency that is responsible for gathering data across all of Canada, it is often not able to collect data on every item of particular interest to specific provinces or regions. This is not necessarily a fault in Statistics Canada, but simply a side-effect of having to gather information on such a large scale.

While Manitoba's provincial government and our businesses are significant users of federal census data, there is also information that should be collected within the province that is not falling within the scope of Statistics Canada's priorities. Data collection activities focused specifically on Aboriginal issues, labour market needs, and other business-related issues would be of particular interest to both the Government of Manitoba and the province's business community.

Regardless of how Statistics Canada's censuses are created and deployed in the future, there is an increasing need for the Government of Manitoba to improve its ability to gather provincial data for use in local government and business planning.

The Manitoba Bureau of Statistics and Data MB collect information on areas such as trades, sales, mining, and agriculture. This collection could be expanded to include vital information of importance to the business community.



***Resolution (MBPR-032)***

That the provincial government:

- **Identifies specific areas of provincial data that do not currently fall within the mandate of Statistics Canada and then creates a process to gather usable data in those areas once a cost-benefit analysis has been undertaken to confirm that the data collection will be worth the expense;**
- **Works with the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce to identify issues of particular importance to the province's business community so that the collection of usable data in those areas can be made a priority;**
- **Communicates directly with industry associations and businesses to ensure that the quality of data collected on identified issues is high quality and as useful as possible.**

*Submitted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2018  
Renewed by Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, May 2022*



## Creating a Manitoba Post-Secondary Transfer Credit System (MBPR-040)

### *Issue*

In Manitoba, universities and public colleges independently determine credit transfer eligibility and articulation for students seeking admission to a program and the details of credit transfer procedures and policies vary by institution. This causes unnecessary additional costs and delays to graduation and entry into the workforce.

One way to facilitate quicker graduation rates for Manitoba learners would be to streamline the process whereby students can more easily transfer credits from one institution to another. At present students are evaluated by the recipient institution to see which credits a student has received elsewhere can be counted toward their diploma/degree. The result can often mean students end up taking courses that are very similar to credits they have already received. Not only does this increase the cost to students but can create delays in graduation and entry into the workforce.

A comprehensive transfer credit system would facilitate a more rapid advancement from learner to earner. We would encourage the province to look to British Columbia as a model of student transfer. The province invested time and resources to complete a compendium of transfer credits. Students can simply go on-line, enter their home institution and the course they have taken and find the equivalent course in the institution that they intend to transfer to. They also delineate reasons why students might not be eligible to receive credit for courses taken and the institution of origin.

These reasons are straightforward and, as per the transfer credit website ([bctransferguide.ca](http://bctransferguide.ca)), they include:

- you took only one course where a two-course combination was required. e.g. COQU ACCT 101 (3) + ACCT 102 (3) = UNBC Commerce 210 (3);
- you failed the course;
- you took the course outside the effective dates of the transfer agreement;
- you took the course too long ago;
- you took too many credits;
- you took a course at another institution without approval or did not get a high enough grade;
- you take two courses that are equivalent to the same course at a receiving institution, you will only receive credit once.

We welcome opportunities to support the development of a more streamlined and efficient model of transfer credits which will create a more accessible postsecondary education system that benefits our learners, our employers, and our economy.





***Resolution (MBPR-040)***

- **That the Province of Manitoba: in consultation with Manitoba post-secondary institutions, creates a streamlined and comprehensive transfer credit system.**

*Submitted by the Brandon Chamber of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## Tracking Students and Funding Post-Secondary Institutions (PSI) in Manitoba (MBPR-043)

### *Issue*

As Manitoba looks to an outcome-based funding model, they will need to re-evaluate the way students are tracked from K-12 and throughout post-secondary education. While these may appear to be separate issues, they are very much related, as one metric consistent in most jurisdictions that employ performance-based funding models is the graduation rate of a PSI, the finishing point of a student. Unless we know more about a student's journey through the provincial education system, we are left with only a snapshot of their journey.

**Outcomes Based Funding:** The Province of Manitoba has indicated that it plans to employ an outcomes-based funding model for PSI's. The Government has indicated that it will proceed though timelines have not been established. Most performance-based outcome models track graduation rate, years to graduation, and earnings after graduation. All of these metrics reward only the last school the student has attended, giving no credit to any other educational institute which may have taught the individual.

**Tracking Students:** One way to address the problem of point of graduation is to properly track students, and here the province of Manitoba has room for improvement. Fortunately, the present government realizes that we need to improve in this area and they have committed to addressing this. Both Quebec and British Columbia presently have working models that the government can observe. Quebec assigns a new student a unique "permanent code" that stays with them for their entire educational journey. If they leave and then return to the Province of Quebec, they continue to use their original code. This allows the government to track and assign credit to each year the student is enrolled from K-12 and all post-secondary.

British Columbia offers a similar Personal Education Number (PEN) to its students when they enter the BC education system. This allows them to use the PEN for "multiple purposes including: the distribution of funding to schools, transition analysis between schools, districts and post-secondary education, exams and student reporting". Every school attended is given part of the credit for the student's successful educational journey.

**Business Need:** The business community requires a labour force skilled in many disciplines. Outcomes-based funding strives to achieve this. For this alignment between business and education to be achieved, funding must be directed at those most deserving.



***Resolution (MBPR-043)***

That the Province of Manitoba:

- **in consultation with post-secondary institutions, develops a provincial identifier system of tracking students from K-12 and throughout post-secondary education.**

*Submitted by The Brandon Chamber of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## Cost-effective Solution to Personal Care Bed Shortage (MBPR-027)

### *Issue*

The Manitoba government identified a shortage of personal care beds as an issue across the province and mandated the addition of 1,200 additional beds over the next 8 years. To date, the government has announced funding for only 258 new beds, and the commitment to personal care home beds over eight years has been abandoned.

There are examples of underutilized health care facilities in the province that have the capacity to assist in addressing the shortfall, with limited financial consequences to the province. As such, there is an opportunity to maintain skilled jobs at these facilities by repurposing sites to accommodate other pressing health care needs, while saving precious tax dollars. One such example is the Manitoba Development Center (MDC), located in Portage la Prairie, and an accredited residential care facility for adults with a mental disability. The Center provides care, supervision, and developmental programs for approximately 160 residents.

In January 2021, the provincial government announced their intentions to close this facility and wind down operations over the following three years. This is an opportunity for our provincial government to utilize current infrastructure for the benefit of all Manitobans, and to help protect one of the most vulnerable sectors of our community as was demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The MDC has become a quality care facility, delivering extraordinary care with compassion and expertise to one of the most difficult and challenging populations. Transitioning residents into the community has reduced the number of residents over the years; however, there will always be residents in need of continuous 24/7 care, although at a much-reduced rate than in the past. As a result, there is under-used capacity; both by way of expert care and expertise as well as underutilization of existing beds.

The MDC buildings and land continue to be maintained and even though in the coming decade the current use of the facility will be unnecessary, other service needs continue unabated. As such, the overall capacity of the site allows for other options. In late 2015, a Task Force was established consisting of broad representation across the City, (business, labour, health, municipal government) and the provincial government. This Task Force meets periodically to develop recommendations for long-term options to utilize the valuable resources of MDC for the future and has met with the province on a number of occasions. A similar approach could be used for other such facilities in Manitoba.



***Resolution (MBPR-027)***

That the provincial government:

- In consultation with key stakeholders, considers the future needs and directions of underutilized health care facilities, and makes a long-term plan to maintain or restructure these much needed facilities;
- Freezes any further job reductions at underutilized health care facilities until a repurposed need and direction be established.

*Submitted by Portage la Prairie Chamber of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017  
Renewed by the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan (MBPR-039)

### *Issue*

The federal government has outlined significant spending to create a Canada-wide early learning and child care system. [Budget 2021](#) proposes investments of \$30 billion over five years and \$8.3 billion annually.

Women are essential to economic growth and fiscal sustainability. The OECD estimates that if women's labour force participation rate equalled men, [GDP would increase](#) by an average of 12% by 2030. According to the International Monetary Fund, if 150,000 educated stay-at-home mothers entered the workforce, [Canada's GDP](#) would be raised by 2%, resulting in an additional \$8 billion in income tax revenues.

Studies show that women continue to bear more responsibility for child care. According to a Statistics Canada report, Canadian mothers spent approximately [30% more time](#) on child care than fathers before the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has increased the [share of child care](#) provided by women from 59.2% to 65.5% in households where both partners work out of the home.

Women's participation in the labour force is greatly enhanced by child care availability, resulting in significant economic growth. In Quebec, the introduction of the early child care model resulted in an additional [70,000 mothers](#) in the labour force—an increase of 3.8% in women's employment. Quebec's GDP grew by 1.7% (\$5 billion) as a result. The tax-transfer returns to the federal and QC governments significantly exceed the cost, at 47% more than the net cost of the program. TD Economics notes several studies that show that every dollar invested in early childhood education returns between [\\$1.49 and \\$2.78 in benefits](#).

The pandemic's economic fallout has disproportionately affected women. Over [16,000 fewer women](#) participate in the labour force, while an additional 91,000 men have joined the labour force.

The availability and quality of childcare depend on child care facilities' ability to recruit and retain staff. Child care facilities have been confronted with frozen revenues in recent years, which has [suppressed staff wages](#) and made it challenging to attract trained employees. Approximately 30% of Manitoba's childcare facilities cannot meet provincial [staffing standards](#). School divisions [compete with the child care sector](#) for Early Childhood Educators and pay them higher wages. In 2019, Early Childhood Educators and Child Care Assistants' [median wage was](#) \$14.50. Staffing shortages result in fewer child care spaces.

Parents have difficulty accessing child care in Manitoba for [several reasons](#), including affordability, a lack of care that fits parents' work or study schedules, and difficulty finding licensed care providers. The Early Learning and Child Care Transformation report prepared by KPMG for the Manitoba Department of Families found that Manitoban parents are [more likely to report difficulty](#) finding child care than the Canadian average. According to Statistics Canada, nearly one-third of Manitoba children have parents who reported [difficulty finding child care](#) in 2020.



In an [MCAA survey](#), 49% of parents reported that child care fees are either a strain on their finances or unaffordable. Nearly [60% of Manitoban children](#) aged 0-12 live in households earning less than two times the poverty line. Approximately 58% of these modest-income families in Manitoba pay [more than 10%](#) of their net income for child care. For comparison, child care is considered affordable when it is [less than 7%](#) of median income in the United States and between 3 and 6% of income in Sweden and Norway.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-039)***

That the provincial government:

- **Recognizes the importance of available, quality child care and endorses in principle the federal government's efforts to expand childcare options.**
- **Works quickly and productively with the federal government to ensure that Manitoba receives its fair share of federal financial commitments to expand child care in communities all across Manitoba.**
- **Collaboratively reviews childcare affordability and employee compensation with the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, the Manitoba Child Care Association, and other stakeholders to improve child care accessibility and quality.**

*Submitted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Policy Committee  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## **Pandemic Recovery (MBPR-041)**

### ***Issue***

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered everything we do and how we live – our daily behaviours, our social connections, our business practices -- and the new normal (our next normal), is largely uncertain. Canada's GDP is not expected to return to pre-pandemic levels before 2022. In some sectors, such as tourism, recovery is not expected until 2024. Canadians will be living with the economic effects of COVID-19 for a long time.

In the short term, vaccination will be the key to loosening health regulations, opening businesses, and returning to what resembles normal. Vaccinations will be essential in mitigating economic downturns in 2021 and 2022.

Government must continue to trust that businesses will do what is best and safest for their clients. Necessary tools, resources, and strategies must be provided to ensure that businesses can operate while ensuring the safety of staff and customers.

It is essential that Manitobans have confidence in government and health care professionals. A clearly outlined and communicated plan for economic recovery will ensure that Manitobans comply with recommended health regulations and trust the information they are being provided.

Long-term economic recovery relies on impactful government policy and decision. As we are aware, certain industries were disproportionately affected by health regulations. Policies should specifically target those hardest hit industries, rather than a one-sized-fits-all approach. Data collection will form the foundation of policy moving forward in the recovery process. This will include tracking the virus, its spread, and who is being impacted. As well as tracking shifts in the economy, labour market, and public perception.



**Resolution (MBPR-041)**

That the provincial government:

- **Coordinates its response based on regional data and virus spread, and commits to ramping up vaccinations to reach Manitoba's daily capacity quickly.**
- **Provides scalable financial supports even after Manitoba has fully re-opened to better address the specific needs of businesses and organizations, including:**
  - **Direct funding support in the form of business grants, particularly to SMEs, to strengthen the digital economy and ensure businesses have the skills they need to manage the implementation of these digital tools and their optimization.**
  - **Direct funding support in the form of business grants to enable reskilling to ensure that displaced employees can return to the new workplace capable, and with skills to meet new needs.**
- **Broadens the definition of COVID data to include mental health crisis, addiction, and family violence.**
- **Communicates more detailed plans with longer lead times for the implementation of health protocols and related changes, including:**
  - **Vaccination plans**
  - **Reopening plans**
  - **Economic recovery strategies**
  - **Future pandemic planning and preparedness**

*Submitted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## Churchill and Northern Manitoba (MBPR-001)

### *Issue*

The Province of Manitoba has been presented with a visionary opportunity to see the North fulfill its immense potential especially in the areas of transportation and commerce, tourism and heritage, sustainable economic development, export, mining, and health care for the indigenous peoples.

The Port of Churchill is the Gateway to the Central Arctic, and its future is important to all of Canada. Part of this strategic direction would be to work on the enhancement of the Port and the surrounding areas and to look for innovative solutions and opportunities together with some collaborative partnerships.

The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce (MCC), along with the government, stakeholders, and Northern leaders have spent many hours engaging residents and business owners on the best steps forward to identify the next steps required to inject new and sustainable life in a critical portion of our province. In late 2016, the province announced a new Northern Economic Development task force, co-chaired by MCC's President and CEO. Their mandate is to lead the implementation of the provincial government's Northern Economic Development Strategy.

In 2018, Arctic Gateway Group formed OneNorth (a consortium of northern Manitoba First Nations and municipalities along the Hudson Bay Railway) and partnered with Fairfax Financial Holdings and AGT to take ownership of the Hudson Bay Port Company, Churchill Marine Tank Farm, and Hudson Bay Rail Company (this project secured \$117M in Federal support from 2018-2028).

Between 2018-2020, passenger and freight rail service have been restored and Port services have fully resumed for both import and export, including six cargo re-supply vessels for Nunavut. In March 2021, the 50% ownership share held by AGT/Fairfax was transitioned to OneNorth to form a 100% Indigenous and Community-owned infrastructure asset

Working in partnership, Indigenous communities and northern businesses will look to models that have been successful in other northern and remote regions of Canada and the world and will move forward on a new path toward the expansion of existing sectors and the development of new economy-building enterprises.

### *Resolution (MBPR-001)*

**That the provincial government works with the Arctic Gateway Group and OneNorth to:**

- **Ensure OneNorth is supported for a seamless transition of ownership**
- **Facilitate opportunities to build trade agreements, interprovincial/territorial partnerships, etc.**

*Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## Northern Transportation Infrastructure (MBPR-004)

### *Issue*

The City of Thompson and regional communities recently completed a process called the Thompson Economic Diversification Working Group (TEDWG), supported by contributions from local employer Vale. The TEDWG process involved a huge amount of information gathering and planning, with consultation across the entire region (including all 33 communities in the region representing Industrial, Municipalities, First Nations, and Northern Affairs communities. The planning approach identified transportation and economic linkages within the region, from the region to the outside, and economic activity travelling through the region, all requiring infrastructure. Examples:

- **Trade Within the Region** – the region under discussion represents approximately 30% of Manitoba’s land mass. Local trade routes tend to flow through Thompson and Norway House. The major trade center is Thompson.
- **Trade Outside the Region** – Communities conduct a huge volume of trade with Manitoba and Canada – in many cases largely dependent on a series of Winter Roads whose reliability has been tested in recent decades.
- **Trade Through the Region** – straddling the Northeast of the Province, the region is home to Manitoba’s only seaport, accessible only by rail. To the north of the region is Nunavut, long a target for increased trade within Manitoba and currently generally served by the East.

The plan has resulted in the formation of the Thompson and Area Roundtable and a number of Action Plans. Among the plans is the Thompson and Region Infrastructure Plan (TRIP). Of the 33 communities involved in the plan, only 3 are identified as having “High” levels of service in transportation. 7 are identified as having “Low” levels of service; while of the 23 considered at “Medium”; 13 of which are one rating point above “Low”. Clearly there is a need to improve Transportation to and from these communities to encourage economic opportunity for the TRIP area and for the rest of Manitoba.

In addition, there is the need to improve links to the North. Recognizing that the rail link remains vital for bulk and other goods transfer there is the opportunity to shift trading patterns with road construction north to Churchill and Nunavut. In addition to the business benefits, the reduced cost of living for local residents would be an enormous benefit shifting spending to goods and away from transportation costs.

We recognize that the East Side Road Authority has been doing a large amount of work to improve transportation to communities in the southeast of the region through the installation of permanent bridge crossings on the winter road system and with the construction of all-weather roads, but the pace is too slow. Manitoba needs partners.



***Resolution (MBPR-004)***

That the Government of Manitoba and the Government of Canada:

- **Commit to an overall Northern Manitoba transportation and infrastructure strategy to bring road and other needed forms of transportation to the North East Region and through the region to Nunavut.**

*Submitted by Thompson Chamber of Commerce*

*Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## Promotion of Mineral Exploration - Mining as a Positive Economic Engine for Manitoba (MBPR-005)

### *Issue*

Mineral exploration is vital to a healthy and sustainable mineral resource industry and province. Growth in the industry has significant economic and social benefits such as job creation, local business opportunities, tax revenues, and infrastructure improvements.

Since 2016, Manitoba's investment attractiveness for mineral exploration and development has decreased significantly. The 2020 Fraser Institute report ranked Manitoba 37th out of 77 jurisdictions on the Investment Attractiveness Index. Manitoba's policy perception score has slightly increased, however, its ranking has dropped from 53rd in 2019 to 58th in 2020. Manitoba is now the lowest-ranked Canadian jurisdiction in policy perception.

Three key policy areas continue to hinder Manitoba's policy perception and investment attraction:

1. Uncertainty concerning disputed land claims (74 per cent of respondents cited this factor as a deterrent to investment)
2. Protected areas (74 per cent of respondents)
3. Socioeconomic agreements (63 per cent of respondents)

Additionally, a significant number of Manitoba-based companies cited concerns regarding the Province of Manitoba's permitting process. Of these respondents, 94% claimed that the time it took to receive permit approvals had lengthened somewhat or considerably over the past 10 years, and 81% of respondents cited the absence of transparency in the permit approval process as a deterrent to investment.



***Resolution (MBPR-005)***

**That the provincial government takes a leadership role in advancing Manitoba as a top jurisdiction in the world for mineral exploration and development investment by:**

- **Making significant improvements in the following policy areas:**
  - **Disputed land claims**
  - **Protected areas**
  - **Socioeconomic agreements**
- **Developing a transparent and timely permitting process for mineral exploration projects**
- **Working together with Indigenous communities in a partnership-based approach to the above policy improvements areas**
- **Continuing to build competitive incentives to attract mineral investment in Manitoba.**

*Submitted by Snow Lake Chamber of Commerce, 2014*

*Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2014*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## Northern Development Strategy (MBPR-006)

### *Issue*

Mineral exploration and development in Manitoba was once in the top 10 in the world. There is a wealth of untapped economic potential in Manitoba's North. Mining exploration and development should continue to provide substantial growth for the communities and northern people, as well as Manitoba as a whole.

We need to:

- Increase predictability and consistency with regards to the regulatory climate and consultations.
- Improve tax regimes to attract investors and provide provincial competitiveness.
- Develop infrastructure to support travel, whether by road, train, or air.
- Educate and train youth and unemployed/underemployed in the North.
- Develop education strategies to ensure youth are staying in school, graduating, and obtaining meaningful employment in the North.
- Develop a retention plan to keep people, including retirees, in the North and ensure that they have the same quality of life as other Manitoba residents.

### *Resolution (MBPR-006)*

**That the provincial government advocates for Manitoba's return to the Top 10 as one of the most attractive jurisdictions for mineral exploration and development and to ensure that we have a labour force, drawn from local people, that can support this development.**

*Submitted by Thompson Chamber of Commerce  
Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2015  
Renewed by Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, May 2018  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2022*



## Connectivity for Rural Manitoba (MBPR-026)

### *Issue*

Despite major cellular providers claiming to have impeccable mobile coverage, servicing a majority of the province, there are still vast regions of the province (in 'covered areas' and along highway routes), that continue without mobile services.

Having limited or no service to major routes and communities in the province not only segregates/ostracizes businesses and people in our province, but also reduces our national economic competitiveness. Even though nearly 60% of Manitoba's population lives within the limits of Winnipeg and Brandon where optimum mobile coverage is supplied, everyone who travels outside of those limits will lose mobile cellular connection depending on where they are in the province. This goes for rural, northern and Indigenous communities in Manitoba which require open access broadband fibre-based networks in order to reduce the digital divide.

Meeting the minimum requirements of 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload accessibility, as set out in Canada's Connectivity Strategy, is a priority infrastructure investment to ensure that no rural community is left behind. Local residents in rural and northern communities know, if they have service in town, they will lose or have spotty service outside of town or won't have any cellular service at all. Residents know where cell service is lacking or nonexistent but major cellular provider network maps on their websites would have you believe they have it covered.

As for the accessible internet, many communities or rural users are left with minimal options that are expensive and unreliable. Cellular and broadband services go hand in hand. Infrastructure for both services can be installed simultaneously in many cases. Providing consistent mobile services along highways in rural and northern Manitoba will make the province more economically competitive. Landlines are becoming a service of the past, and mobile capabilities are becoming an essential service for business.

The pace of not just e-commerce but m-commerce (mobile business), is advancing daily. Increasing the reach of cellular services along these routes and to the communities that reside along these routes makes them more attractive for business. Businesses can be more inclined to travel and perhaps set up new shops in these communities. Having adequate mobile services can lead aspiring entrepreneurs to generate new business and/ or current businesses can expand.

The business sector residing across all rural, indigenous, and northern Manitoba proves to be at a disadvantage. Farmers, local producers, rural and northern businesses should have similar advantages to urban businesses in regards to connectivity in their line of work.

Safety is another concern whereas workers are typically isolated in remote locations without adequate means of communication should a situation arise. Emergency notifications like those sent out to warn residence of major storms via text message are essentially useless in a lot of rural settings.





***Resolution (MBPR-026)***

That the provincial government encourages cellular and broadband providers to:

- Survey their coverage areas and properly service the major routes in the province (highways); getting “boots on the ground” to actually assess the routes and determine where added services are required;
- Plan towards 100% mobile coverage on every piece of paved highway by 2027 as well as making it a priority as federal government to see rural connectivity achieved by 2027;
- Implement consistent and reliable coverage. No drop of cellular coverage which means having access to mobile calls and mobile data internet at all times along highways;
- Grant rural business similar mobile-commerce advantages to urban businesses, giving rural businesses the platform to expand, become more efficient, and also added safety.
- Use towers and other infrastructure that are already constructed by industry and partially paid for by government to defray the cost of coverage.
- Leverage the federal funding and be mindful of the efficiencies that supporting broadband and cellular development simultaneously; and
- Make clear strategies with rural broadband providers to initiate connecting rural, northern and indigenous areas as a partner in Canada’s Connectivity Strategy.

*Submitted by Dauphin Chamber of Commerce, 2017*

*Supported by: Thompson & District Chamber of Commerce*

*Snow Lake Chamber of Commerce, Swan Valley Chamber of Commerce,*

*Flin Flon & District Chamber of Commerce, The Pas & District Chamber of Commerce*

*Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## **Providing Regional Government Services Support (MBPR-035)**

### ***Issue***

Government jobs are being vacated due to retirement, moving or other reasons. These jobs are not being filled in the original community, but instead moved to a central location. Provincial government services are being centralized which is having a negative impact on northern and rural communities, both economically and service wise. There is a need for regional services to be delivered in the regions they serve.

Community Planning Branch; Employment Standards; Residential Tenancies; Fire Commissioner's Office; Department of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations; Department of Environment, Climate and Parks; Property Assessment Branch; Regional Airports Information; and Family Services branches have all seen a substantial decrease in positions and jobs to the detriment of Manitoba's communities. Lack of these services in the regional communities means extended wait times for information and assistance and loss of employment opportunities for local people.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-035)***

**That the provincial government:**

**Implements recognized service standards to the regional communities and provides internship programs to train people in the local community with consideration of the accessibility requirements of the users.**

*Submitted by Thompson Chamber of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2018  
Renewed by Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, May 2022*



## 911 Service and a Northern 911 Call Centre (MBPR-036)

### ***Issue***

911 service is common in rural and urban areas in southern Manitoba, but many regions in northern Manitoba do not yet have 911 service from a landline. Major telecommunications companies have advised that the infrastructure is not in place to allow 911 service, and while they are actively working on getting this done, it could be years until it is completed and operational.

Further, only one public service answering point (PSAP) exists to receive emergency calls coming from all Manitoba rural and northern communities. If something happens to this PSAP which renders it offline, 911 services would be unavailable to northern and rural communities. MCC asserts that reliable 911 service should be a reality for all Manitoba residents.

Thompson is northern Manitoba's service centre and provides advanced fire protection and emergency medical service to the city and immediate area. A 911 PSAP in a northern centre such as Thompson to serve northern Manitoba would have a clear understanding of the geography, community capacity, and cultural nuances of this region. It would also improve the ability to coordinate emergency response in the case of a major natural disaster or human catastrophe, and reduce call wait times.

Due to the variety of experience, assets, and levels of emergency preparedness from volunteers in smaller communities, communications in the North is a critical link to bringing components together to maximize effectiveness. Effective and reliable communication, combined with the specially trained and certified career staff in Thompson who are familiar with the region, is essential to mobilizing emergency services. Linking a northern-based 911 PSAP centre to Thompson Fire and Emergency Services would more effectively and efficiently provide 911 service to the North, and serve as an emergency backup to the existing PSAP in Brandon.

### ***Resolution (MBPR-036)***

**That the Province of Manitoba commits to:**

- **Communicating the need for immediate solutions to make 911 service a reality for all Manitobans and encouraging telecommunication providers to speed up the installation of infrastructure to enable northern 911 service.**
- **Developing and operating a northern-based 911 PSAP call centre to serve northern Manitoba.**

*Submitted by Thompson Chamber of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2019  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2023*



## Northern Highways Improvements (MBPR-046)

### *Issue*

The accidental death of MLA Danielle Adams on Hwy 6 December 9, 2021 highlighted the dangers and risks for people when travelling on northern highways. Passing lanes are an integral part of the highway system throughout southern Manitoba, while the remote areas of the Interlake and North do not have any passing lanes. Although long haul trucking service is essential to companies hauling product south and supplies north, they are difficult to pass in summer and dangerous in the winter when billowing snow blocks your view and daylight hours are shorter. The chances of an accident, causing damages, injuries and possibly death have also increased. Add in the factors of no passing lanes, no rest stops, and the remoteness between communities. Plus, our communities don't have air ambulance or paramedic services within minutes – sometimes it takes hours. Time that many people don't have. The cost of human life cannot be equated with the cost of highway improvements.

Transport truck traffic is increasing annually with all U.S. imports destined for northern Manitoba carried in on Hwy 75 and continuing up Hwy 6. Approximately 100,000 transport trucks bring goods north from the Winnipeg area annually. Vale Mine in Thompson transports approximately 80 trucks containing 42,000kgs of raw concentrate every month to Ontario via Hwy 6. They receive 30 supply trucks every month, bringing in soda ash, fuel, cement, and other supplies to Vale. Grain and asphalt imports from Saskatchewan are transported on Highways 10 and 39. Canadian Kraft Paper transports raw and finished product via these same highways. This impacts not only the northern economy, but all of Manitoba.

The Provincial Government sees significant economic development for northern Manitoba, which requires increased infrastructure. Manitoba Chambers of Commerce has led economic development initiatives for increased northern economic development. The provincially funded, and MCC delivered, Manitoba Mineral Development Fund (MMDF) is supporting the increased exploration and comprehensive development activities that are leading to increased mining development. Tourism Manitoba spends \$450,000 on advertising tourism to Northern Manitoba destinations, however, we do not have the necessary highway improvements to bring tourists here. Northern communities have been planning for significant future economic development. Thompson's Economic Diversification Working Group report specifically notes transportation infrastructure is critical.



## RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & NORTHERN MANITOBA

As part of the Provincial Government's Economic Growth Action Plan, implementation of the Look North Initiative includes engaging with northern municipalities, Indigenous communities, business training providers and other stakeholders to advance initiatives that grow local companies and industries, create jobs, attract talent and investment and increase the economic competitiveness and prosperity of Northern Manitoba. The Look North Action Plan identifies six priorities:

- Northern mineral and other resource potential
- Indigenous engagement & partnerships
- Strategic infrastructure investment
- Housing challenges & opportunities
- Enterprise eco-system of support
- Education, training & workforce development

These six priorities are the foundation of the Look North Strategy and provide the framework to achieve economic prosperity in Northern Manitoba. Economic prosperity in the north will mean prosperity throughout the province. We are now calling for some tangible investment in highways infrastructure. Northern highways need wide shoulders, passing lanes, and rest stops, along with future EV Charging stations.

Sweden has improved their northern highways with a 2 + 1 lane approach that has reduced accidents by 50%. A 2+1 road is a specific category of three-lane road, consisting of two lanes in one direction and one lane in the other, alternating every few kilometres. The second lane allows faster-moving traffic to overtake slower vehicles at regular intervals. Northern Ontario is considering this option.

Improvements to northern highways must also include rest stops. Along northern highways rest stop facilities do not exist for extended periods of time – perhaps two to three hours. The Northern Regional Health Authority supports initiatives which positively affect social determinants of health including basic amenities and the environment. Research shows that the social determinants can be more important than healthcare or lifestyle choices and are fundamental to improving health and reducing long standing inequities, which requires action by all sectors of society.

Future DCFC/Level 3 EV Charging stations will provide future tourism opportunities, increasing the economic benefits and development for Manitoba.



***Resolution (MBPR-046)***

**That the provincial government improves northern highways, through the construction of passing lanes and wider shoulders and the introduction of rest stops to include public washrooms and garbage cans. Rest stops to be no more than 100 kilometres apart or from a community which can provide these services. That the Government of Manitoba also provide future budgeting for EV Charging stations along northern and rural highways to increase the tourism economy and further, that these highway improvements be expedited as quickly as possible with a start date no later than 2023.**

*Submitted by Thompson Chamber of Commerce*

*Indigenous Chamber of Commerce*

*Churchill Chamber of Commerce*

*Flin Flon Chamber of Commerce*

*The Pas OCN Chamber of Commerce*

*Snow Lake Chamber of Commerce*

*Swan River Chamber of Commerce*

*Gillam Chamber of Commerce*

*Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2022*



## Transit Services beyond the Perimeter (MBPR-047)

### ***Issue***

The build up of both commercial and residential development, just outside of the Manitoba capital city's boundaries but within the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region, is seeing rapid growth and economic expansion supporting both employment lands and healthy family lifestyles. Consistent with a smart regional transportation plan is providing alternatives such as transit service for employees going to and from work in these new economic areas as well as families travelling between home and the City of Winnipeg. These expansion and development areas all offer no such opportunities to connect and support areas north, south, east, or west of the city. The existing 'siloed' policy and operating environment perpetuates the 'travel by car' environment that is the only option available for these areas. In the near term, this will notably limit the services into the CentrePort Canada lands as well as west of the city where there are many recreation and hospitality options for families.

### **Background**

John Blumberg served almost continuously on Winnipeg City Council between 1919 and 1961. Before his time on Council, John was a streetcar motorman. For part of his time on Council, John was Chairman of the Greater Winnipeg Transit Commission.

The City of Winnipeg is budgeting for and advancing the services to CentrePort Canada lands that will support its continued expansion, including much needed residential housing, and connections with the RM of Rosser.

### **Opportunity**

The irony of John Blumberg being a former Chairman of the Winnipeg Transit Commission is not lost. It would be a fitting first step in a revitalized transit plan that provided transit service beyond the perimeter to serve the growth and rapid development associated with the Assiniboia Downs, Red River Exhibition, the ice-plex, the cemeteries, the Birchwood Auto-park, the hotel developments in the area and access to the Blumberg lands. After voting 13 to 3 not to sell Blumberg, City Council should look for a shared services agreement and implement regular transit service to Blumberg which is just outside of Winnipeg, and the Assiniboia Downs neighbourhood which is inside Winnipeg. The Blumberg lands and Assiniboia Downs neighbourhood have major recreational facilities. It is important that Manitobans from all walks of life have proper access to these recreational facilities.

As a second step, the implementation of a route network serving the CentrePort Canada lands would be appropriate prior to the housing being constructed so families know they will have choices for travel prior to their housing purchase.



***Resolution (MBPR-047)***

**That the provincial government authorize transit services outside of the City of Winnipeg and provide operating funding support to initiate transit service linking economic lands and development outside the City of Winnipeg to major bus routes inside the city limits.**

*Submitted by the Assiniboia Chamber of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, May 2022*





## **Showcasing & Supporting the Arts & Creative Industries in Manitoba (MBPR-009)**

### ***Issue***

Like many, the arts and creative industries have felt the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Performing arts saw an approximate 60% decrease in operating revenue in 2020. As of January 2022, the Canadian live performance sector's real GDP remains 53.4% away from a full recovery, and employment is 37.7% away from pre-pandemic levels. Wage subsidies, grants, and digital adaptation has only slightly mitigated the effects. Recovery for the arts and creative industries will take more government support, investment, and promotion.

Pre-pandemic, Manitoba attracted millions of visitors from around the world. The countless attractions and over 100 community festivals showcased what makes Manitoba a great place to live. The economic impacts the arts and creative industries have on Manitoba cannot be overstated. If Manitoba is to recover from the pandemic, the province must ensure that it fosters an environment that encourages arts and culture to thrive.

The recovery process needs to start with making provisions for how to attract and retain talent. The arts and cultural sector in Manitoba has a large role to play, and if consulted with as a partner, can work to attract and retain talent by increasing overall well-being and other intangible factors that contribute to the quality of life. If arts and culture and artists can develop and give meaning to the idea of being Manitoban, then the province itself can build cohesive communities with residents keen to make their lives in Manitoba.

If Manitoba is to achieve its potential to become the world-class jurisdiction it strives to be, then arts and culture must be thought of as a key contributor to defining the province, improving the quality of life, and contributing to our economy. There are considerable economic advantages to be gained from investment in arts and culture, in addition to intrinsic benefits that include increased community pride, positive impact on health and wellness, and a more diverse and adept workforce able to respond to new industries. There is a significant opportunity in Manitoba to increase arts and culture related economic activity in the economic recovery of COVID-19.



***Resolution (MBPR-009)***

**That the provincial government:**

- **Promotes Manitoba’s unique and natural cultural and heritage identity.**
- **Ensures that Manitoba’s annual per capita investment and funding in arts, culture, heritage, and creativity is among the top three within Canada.**
- **Creates innovative private investment incentive opportunities for creative and cultural activities and organizations.**

*Submitted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Tourism Committee*

*Initially adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2015*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, May 2018*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2022*



## Increasing Road Sign and Advertising across Manitoba (MBPR-029)

### *Issue*

Travel across any highway west or south of Manitoba and you will find road signs that provide those going with updates on distance, gas stops, restaurants, accommodations, and things to do in each upcoming stop. Travel across Manitoba, and you will notice some signage, but certainly not with the same frequency or as detailed as what you can find elsewhere.

The tourism industry's future looks bright in Manitoba with the re-investment by the Government of Canada, Destination Canada, and Travel Manitoba to promote to the US, a large tire traveler market. Government and industry have increased investment in tourism marketing; product development and visitor services; Provincial sites and parks infrastructure; extending the tourism season and developing a vision for our tourism destination. Highway Signage should provide motorists with safe directional information for the types of services and attractions they are seeking, such as:

- Places offering accommodation, food, fuel and washrooms;
- Places to explore and experience Manitoba's culture, history, nature, events and adventures; and
- Distance to the next centre.

The Manitoba Regional Tourism Network (MRTN), is a collaboration of the six rural Regional Tourism Associations (RTAs) in Manitoba, and partially funded by the Province to develop and promote tourism experiences in conjunction with rural businesses, municipalities, and the industry. They have brought similar suggestions through research-based and consumer-focused in providing safe, clear directional signage that communicates and strategically promotes the attractions and services available in the regions.

In the last year and a half, the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, after notification from the Rosenort Chamber, met with then Minister of Highways and Infrastructure, Steve Ashton, on a matter of concern to Rosenort and their surrounding Rural Municipalities. In 2015, Rosenort Chamber requested a highway "amenities sign" to help promote their community and businesses to the busy highway travelers on Highway 75. The proposal made its way to Manitoba Infrastructure personnel but moved extremely slow, with minimal communication or firm confirmation. During that meeting with Ashton, he was clear that the legislation was clear and he would follow it to the letter. This left the community without a chance to bring further visitors to the local businesses.



***Resolution (MBPR-029)***

That the provincial government updates the Advertising Sign Policy to:

- **Conduct province-wide information sessions with key stakeholders; presenting findings of the research to stakeholders; highlighting the preferred approach; seeking input and direction for an implementation plan.**
- **Require signs to provide accurate and adequate information for finding destinations, services, local festivals, and events;**
- **Have a consistent requirement for legibility, letter size, and fonts, symbols;**
- **Location for quick and easy visibility; and**
- **Create a minimal impact on the visual integrity of the landscape.**

*Submitted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce*

*Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017*

*Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## Extending the Operation of Provincial Park Campgrounds in Manitoba (MBPR-033)

### *Issue*

Manitoba's 92 protected provincial park spaces are among the most respected and visited by locals as well as visitors to our province. Every year, the opportunity to reserve a campsite in Manitoba is met with a wave of excitement but often spots are gone in short order. People wish to enjoy the outdoors and camping during our relatively short season. On average, the camping season starts in early May and, in some cases extends until Thanksgiving. Factors have provided an opportunity to reexamine the season's length. An aging worldwide demographic is changing the behaviour of visitors, who are choosing to travel to Manitoba earlier in the year and stay later in the season. Extending the annual operating season for Manitoba Provincial Park Campgrounds would contribute new dollars to the provincial economy. If we aren't open for business that market will go elsewhere.

In the fall of 2021, the provincial government gathered feedback on the current online reservation system. They have implemented short-term solutions to address issues with the online reservation system, with the intent that there will be a new system in place for 2023. The provincial government has also made several policy changes that will support campers, increase spaces and availability, and help streamline the reservation process. Among the feedback from consumers was the suggestion of extending the camping season earlier into the spring and later into fall.

By missing the possibility of an extra two months of use, the majority of the parks are not supporting the work that many are doing, including by Travel Manitoba, marketing ourselves as a 4-season province. Currently, Parks are not meeting the needs of a changing demographic, local, and international. Other jurisdictions have made a similar case for extending the operational season for various reasons, including:

- Parks with expanded hours have increased revenues;
- A soft Canadian dollar is increasing visitation from the U.S. & European market;
- Aging demographic travels earlier and later in the year;
- Increased revenue in retail and service industries;
- Approximately 25% of visitors travel for outdoor recreation;
- Canadian snowbirds might delay their departure from the province with an extended Parks season;
- Inconsistent operating dates across the province pits park against park;
- A longer season will result in increased contractor services resulting in increased employment translating more benefits paid;
- Expanding the operation of parks signals a recognition of a 4-season travel province;
- Expanded operations would increase the competitive advantage in a highly competitive global tourism industry; and
- Expanding the operating season should be done with a balance between the benefits and cost recovery for the province.



***Resolution (MBPR-033)***

That the provincial government:

- **Extends the Manitoba Provincial Park Campground season from April 15 through October 25 across the province to acknowledge and accommodate the changing behaviour of visitors to Manitoba's provincial parks.**

*Submitted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2018  
Renewed by Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, May 2022*



## Rest Stops at Intervals along Manitoba Highways (MBPR-042)

### *Issue*

In some areas of the province as you travel along the highways there is a community with a public washroom and garbage can every 45 minutes or so. In other areas, there are no rest stops for extended periods of time. This makes travelling with children, pets, elders, or anyone with a disability or health concern difficult.

Once established these rest stops will improve the lives of Manitobans and the tourist experience. A long highway drive is daunting but knowing that there will be places to stop to use the washroom, throw out trash, change the baby, have lunch, or just stretch your legs will make the trip go by quickly and safely.

Regular rest stops would provide a safe parking place for long haul drivers as well as anyone who feels drowsy. Having rest stops will help prevent people pulling over onto the shoulder for a variety of reasons and being a traffic risk. Better rested drivers – whether from sleep or a break – makes the highways safer for everyone and could lead to a reduction in accidents on Manitoba highways.

Having regular garbage cans and washroom facilities at intervals along all Manitoba highways would help keep the highways and ditches clean and scenic while also protecting the environment from litter and pollution.

### *Resolution (MBPR-042)*

That the Province of Manitoba:

- **Introduces garbage cans, public washrooms, and rest stop areas along provincial highways in Manitoba which will be no more than 100 kilometres apart or from a community which can provide such services.**

*Submitted by The Pas & District Chamber of Commerce  
Thompson Chamber of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## Addressing Barriers to Indigenous Participation in Canada's Economy (MBPR-025)

### *Issue*

The lack of clarity or progress regarding the government's approaches to many Indigenous issues – including the duty to consult and unresolved land claims – threatens the future socioeconomic well-being of communities across Manitoba while hindering meaningful discourse on the development of reconciliation and natural resource sector projects.

The duty to consult and accommodate Indigenous communities which may be adversely affected by resource development lies with both the Canadian and provincial governments, who are increasingly shifting that responsibility to resource sector businesses seeking to advance projects on or near Indigenous lands. However, the government's lack of clarity or direction on the extent of that approach has frequently created considerable challenges for all involved; in some cases, that lack of clarity has led to the stalling or outright halting of projects with potential economic and social benefits for the affected Indigenous communities, and Manitoba at large. Indeed, addressing the questions surrounding this process would also help to build unity between the Indigenous peoples in Manitoba.

Canadian governments have a constitutional duty to consult and accommodate Indigenous peoples when proposed developments have the potential to impact their constitutionally protected rights (e.g., land, hunting and fishing, etc.). There is confusion in the business community regarding its role in the duty to consult process, and lack of clarity regarding companies' responsibilities to Indigenous peoples has become more obscured in light of the government's commitments.

This lack of clarity can lead to the failure to pursue, delay or cancellation of private sector projects that have the potential to provide long-term economic and social benefits to Indigenous communities and all Manitobans including:

- education and training;
- employment;
- aboriginal business development;
- health care;
- housing; and
- the means to sustain cultural priorities including language, traditions, etc.

Our government leaders, both national and provincial — as the primary interlocutor between our Indigenous peoples and other constituencies — need to lead the way.

### **Unresolved Land Claims**

Also in need of immediate attention is the government's lack of progress in addressing unresolved land claims. The land claims process is a complex one, involving multiparty negotiations of complicated historical, property, legal, financial, and implementation issues, which are often further complicated by other concerns such as bureaucratic issues and a lack of resources or capacity. As a result, the process is often lengthy: reaching a final agreement can take from 5 to 20 years.





Indeed, since the federal government began negotiating modern treaties with Indigenous groups and provincial/territorial governments in 1973, 26 comprehensive land claims and three self-government agreements have been signed. Numerous land claims negotiations are currently underway across Canada, with 80 comprehensive land claims under negotiation with the federal government.

This backlog of longstanding legal issues poses significant challenges for the natural resources sector and First Nations communities alike, creating considerable investment and operational uncertainties that inhibit meaningful progress. Resolving these issues is of benefit to all, as they allow for paving the way for productive dialogue on resource development, while also helping the communities themselves. Resolution and reconciliation with these communities are crucial, particularly in a time where they represent Canada's youngest and fastest-growing population.

### **Reconciliation**

Many non-Indigenous businesses are seeing opportunities in the commitment to a renewed relationship with our Indigenous peoples and believe they have a role to play in its accomplishment.

Recommendation 92 of 2015's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report is a call-to-action for businesses to:

"... adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework ..."

This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
2. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
3. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

Article 19 of the Declaration states:

"States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their representative institutions to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adoption and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them."

Businesses are willing to do more in the interests of their projects moving forward. However, it is not clear to businesses what reconciliation means and what is required of them to participate in the reconciliation process, as well as the impact and outcomes they can expect as a result.



**Resolution (MBPR-025)**

That the provincial government builds relationships with the federal government that will:

- **Develop a consistent, coordinated approach to Indigenous consultation and accommodation which clearly identifies Indigenous rights and responsibilities and the duties of the Crown and the role of industry as a stakeholder supporting the process; harmonizes provincial, territorial and federal processes; and reflects relevant factors such as new and existing obligations within established case law;**
- **Ensure sufficient resources are dedicated to communicating and implementing this approach across government, industry, and Indigenous communities; and,**
- **Accelerate the process of resolving land claims in a manner that reflects due financial prudence.**
- **Establish the framework and timelines for a process for reconciliation with Indigenous peoples that includes:**
  - a. **Examining international best practices, and,**
  - b. **Seeking the perspectives of a broad range of stakeholders including businesses and Indigenous communities to share ideas and provide greater clarity regarding:**
  - c. **The meaning of its commitment to “implement” the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;**
  - d. **The scope of the “full review of laws, policies, and operational practices” and its intentions for amending current laws, including the meaning and potential implications of Free, Prior and Informed Consent;**
  - e. **Tools to be available to businesses and Indigenous communities to help both — as well as government — fulfill the obligations required of them, including guidelines for engagement to seek the level of cooperation and trust needed as a foundation for reconciliation.**

*Submitted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## First Nations Urban Development Areas (FNUDA) (MBPR-028)

### *Issue*

There is evidence that creating First Nations Urban Development Areas (FNUDSAs, commonly referred to as Urban Reserves) in communities across Canada are often challenging from a process and general public perspective. This is primarily based on beliefs of tax advantages offered to First Nations businesses and people, leading to an unfair competitive business environment.

There also exists a belief by some that establishing FNUDA's would have an adverse impact on the social fabric of Manitoba communities. Background First Nations Urban Development Areas are not only an important opportunity to engage Aboriginal people in Business and Employment opportunities with one of Manitoba's fastest growing populations, but it is also an untapped economic development engine. In fact, a blog post on October 15, 2016, by the National Aboriginal Economic Board shows that, six communities have collectively created over 7,000 jobs and over \$77 million in annual economic activity benefiting both First Nations and neighboring municipalities.

Combined success of the six communities mentioned above include:

- Existing and planned investment estimated to exceed \$1.5 billion;
- Current and anticipated investment has and will generate approximately 2,700 ongoing jobs held by reserve residents and approximately 4,400 ongoing jobs held by off-reserve residents;
- Approximately \$77 million annually in support of off-reserve economic activity;
- Over \$30 million annually in First Nation government revenues generated by the investment of the six urban reserves;
- Approximately \$5 million annually in property taxes collected by non-First Nation local governments attributable to the investment of these six urban reserves.

In addition to quantifying the economic success of urban reserves, the report also identifies the five key factors that contribute to their success. These include infrastructure and services, governance, land management regime, own source revenues and community support. These factors were determined by interviewing key community members in each of the six cases.

While the term Urban Reserves once conjured up a negative response in many non-aboriginal communities, today there are 10 Urban Reserves that have been created or exist in Manitoba and approximately another 55 in Saskatchewan. These developments have been successful in creating an economic stimulus in those communities and in fact have been instrumental in building the relationships between First Nations and the urban communities.

A FNUDA represents an area within an urban zone that a First Nation owns and has surrendered to the Crown so that it be designated as reserve land for the First Nations. Such lands allow for First Nations business ventures to enjoy the same privileges as those on traditional reserve lands. For First Nations businesses, this means that they must apply through a laborious and long process through



## INDIGENOUS ISSUES & RECONCILIATION

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and receive approval by way of Order-In-Council before receiving status as an Urban Reserve.

Once approved, businesses and First Nations members who would have received tax benefits on traditional reserve lands as set out in the Indian Act are entitled to the same benefits on the Urban Reserve. Urban Reserves are under the jurisdiction of the First Nation governance not the municipality and therefore are not subject to Municipal, Provincial, or Federal taxes and the Status First Nation employees working on reserve do not pay Provincial or Federal Personal Taxes.

However, for a FNUDA to receive City services, the First Nation must enter into a “Municipal Services Agreement”, that stipulates the services they will receive and the fee associated with those services. Municipal Service Agreements are negotiated on a case-by-case basis between the municipality and the First Nation and might include all the services provided to non-reserve businesses or specific services only such as policing, garbage, fire or emergency services.

In addition, the Provincial and Federal Governments have been clear in their direction and appetite for First Nations Economic Developments. They see Urban Reserves as an economic driver for not only the urban economy but in fact, the First Nations economy. In summary, the Brandon Chamber of Commerce sees FNUAs as positive opportunities to build economic development, enhance our business communities, and the Province’s openness to build strong relationships with our First Nation’s community.



***Resolution (MBPR-028)***

That the provincial government:

- **Works with Municipalities and the Manitoba Association of Municipalities to be proactive in building relationships with First Nations and supporting the development of FNUDAs in Manitoba.**
- **Supports Municipalities in facilitating FNUDAs in their communities by developing a template Municipal Services Agreement for their customization that is based on best practices with regards to parity with non-reserve businesses in matters such as fees collected as compensation for tax loss, By-law compatibility and enforcement and dispute resolutions.**
- **Proactively informs Manitoba Municipalities of opportunities to leverage infrastructure funding from higher levels of Government for FNUDA projects and**
- **wherever possible supports the Municipalities in their efforts to leverage existing infrastructure opportunities.**
- **Encourages and supports with applicable information pieces, the Manitoba business community, to proactively gain an understanding of First Nation Urban Development Areas and foster a business relationship with First Nation communities and FNUDA tenants conducting business in Manitoba.**

*Submitted by The Brandon Chamber of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2017  
Renewed by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021*



## Manitoba's Indigenous Procurement Initiative (IPI) (MBPR-034)

### *Issue*

The Indigenous Chamber of Commerce's (ICC) focus is on the Indigenous business community throughout all of Manitoba. The ICC has near 200 members. Its objectives include:

- To serve the Indigenous business community and express positions and opinions on business issues and other public issues relevant to Indigenous business, on behalf of its membership.
- To provide a forum for the Indigenous business community to develop policy positions and programs which contribute to the social, economic and physical quality of life in Indigenous and all communities in Manitoba and Canada.
- To promote a society and economy primarily based on competitive enterprise and on concern for the individual in our society.

The vast majority of ICC's members are Indigenous owned businesses. These businesses stand to gain significantly from improved economic development for Indigenous communities, along with all Manitobans and Canadians.

In the most tangible of terms, as noted in the November 25, 2016 article by the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board<sup>3</sup>, there is the \$2.8 billion gain available when First Nations achieve the same economic status of living as other Canadians. With Manitoba's population of about 1.3 million persons, and its share of the national First Nations population, it is about \$2,150 per Manitoban every year, forever. This is by far Manitoba's largest economic development opportunity.

This economic gain is very similar to that estimated by the "Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Education", 2009, by the Centre for the Study of Living Standards<sup>4</sup>, which estimated an impact that would have amounted to about \$2,000 per person in Manitoba. The credibility of the estimated impact is greatly strengthened by both studies showing similar dollars per Manitoban, when done by different research organizations using different methodologies.

Given the size of this economic opportunity, effective and efficient government actions that will contribute to achieving this gain are warranted. They need to be viewed as investments in an expanded future economy, not an expense.

### **INDIGENOUS PROCUREMENT INITIATIVE (IPI)**

The Manitoba Government, through its Manitoba Finance Central Services, Procurement and Supply Chain Division, has developed the Indigenous Procurement Initiative (IPI) to "increase the participation of Indigenous business providing goods and services to Manitoba Government departments."

The current IPI dated July 23, 2020, is essentially identical to the prior IPI dated from February 25, 2015.

As such, the current IPI needs dramatic improvements because:

<sup>3</sup> [http://naedb-cndea.com/reports/naedb\\_report\\_reconciliation\\_27\\_7\\_billion.pdf](http://naedb-cndea.com/reports/naedb_report_reconciliation_27_7_billion.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.csls.ca/reports/csls2009-3.pdf>



## INDIGENOUS ISSUES & RECONCILIATION

1. The preamble contains words that sound meaningful, but the IPI includes such excessive exemptions that is not effective at achieving any of the objectives described;
2. It does not contain the other necessary components to be effective, e.g. targets, accountability by department through reporting results (at least annually), or any incentives;
3. It no longer reflects best practises in other jurisdictions, e.g. Federal Government has 5% target without exemptions; and
4. It has **not** included any consultation with Indigenous businesses, e.g. the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce (in spite of saying so in press releases and on its website ([https://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/psb/api/api\\_faq.html](https://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/psb/api/api_faq.html))).

### WHY IS THE IPI NEEDED - GOVERNMENT PRACTICES AND LAWS

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has made many Canadians more aware of the tremendous damage created by Federal Government residential schools' policies and practices.

However, most Canadians are less aware of the discriminatory practices that restricted First Nations business and economic activity. As an example, the Indian Act for long times prohibited First Nations individuals from using labour saving devices in business, specifically banning farm implements like horse drawn cultivators. Indian Agents were appointed by the Canadian government to control many aspects of each reserve, including preventing people from leaving to sell market garden products in nearby towns. Prosperous bands were forced into poor economic conditions.<sup>5</sup>

This discriminatory economic orientation has continued in more recent government practices. Thus, to create a more equal opportunity, there is a need to offset the disadvantages created by government laws and practices with actions such as an IPI. This is not just ethically and morally correct. It is also a smart investment that will provide economic returns for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Manitobans and Canadians for the long-term future.

### IPI'S STATED PURPOSE

The July 23, 2020 version of the IPI Overview<sup>6</sup> states:

#### Background:

The Manitoba Government, through its Procurement Services Branch, has developed the Indigenous Procurement Initiative (IPI) in order to increase the participation of Indigenous business providing goods and services to Manitoba Government departments.

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<sup>5</sup> Mr. James Wilson, Commissioner, Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, in presentation to the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce board; and First Nations Farming, <https://treaty6education.lskysd.ca/firstnationsfarming>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/psb/pubs/api/indigeneous%20procurement%20initiative.docx>



### **The IPI will:**

- Support Manitoba's commitment to community economic development for a provincial economy that is more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable;
- Use procurement practices to assist in the development of Indigenous business;
- Maximize opportunities for Indigenous business to access government tenders, while maintaining competitive pricing for government.

### **Potential benefits:**

- Help stimulate Indigenous business development;
- Increase procurement from Indigenous businesses through sub-contracting and/or joint ventures with the general business community when bidding on tenders;
- Build relationships between Indigenous business, government Administrators and the general business community;
- Improve understanding of the tender process by Indigenous business;
- Increase knowledge of the Indigenous business community by government administrators.

### **IPI - NOT BEING USED EFFECTIVELY**

The 'Overview' sounds meaningful, however, the Indigenous Procurement Manual<sup>7</sup> dated July 23, 2020 contains many dramatic exemptions that significantly defeat the IPI's stated purposes.

It exempts significant governmental entities and types of procurement as follows:

#### **Entities that are Exempt:**

- Agencies, Boards, Commissions, Committees, or similar entities that report to the executive branch of the Manitoba Government
- Crown Corporations
- "MASH" Sector Purchasing Authorities such as:
  - Municipalities and Municipal Organizations
  - Advanced Education (Universities and Colleges)
  - Schools
  - Manitoba Health Authorities

Some of these entities have Indigenous Procurement policies, but a great many do not, which makes the IPI ineffective.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/psb/pubs/api/indigenous%20procurement%20policy.pdf>





### **Types of Procurement that are Exempt:**

The IPI Policy and internal Operating Guidelines also do not apply to the following commodities:

- Construction related procurement (e.g.: facility repair)
- Construction of capital projects (e.g.: buildings)
- Capital works programs (e.g.: winter roads or Northern Involvement) where alternate Indigenous procurement options may be used.

Together these exemptions make the IPI much less effective because most government expenditures are exempted from achieving its stated purpose.

### **EFFICIENCY OF GOVERNMENT**

While the public sector needs to be obtaining goods and services at competitive and cost-effective prices, purchasing very little under the IPI prevents the investment in building Indigenous business capacity that will make Manitoba wealthier in the future, for all Manitobans.

Many governments use ‘procurement strategies’ to achieve policy objectives because of their economic efficiency. They are a policy tool that is grafted onto existing administrative structures, instead of creating entirely new resources with their related costs.

For example, when the Canadian Government first implemented its Aboriginal procurement strategy in 1996, it was during a time of severe budget cutting. The strategy helped to alleviate Aboriginal inequities in contract awards and to create wealth in communities; while being an inexpensive solution, as it did not provide any extra funding for Aboriginal groups<sup>8</sup>.

Efficiency of Government includes investing in initiatives that will result in economic development that benefits Manitobans with payoffs in the future. As noted in the 3rd to 5th paragraphs on page one, Manitoba’s largest economic development opportunity can be advanced by a modest investment, and a public policy decision, to implement a comprehensive IPI, using best practices from the Federal Government and others.

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<sup>8</sup> An Evaluation of Canada’s Procurement Policies for Aboriginal Business, by Erinn Mah, Manitoba Policy Perspectives | Volume 1, Issue 1: August 2014, page 69



### SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS PROCUREMENT INITIATIVES

The principle of investing in new undertakings to generate Indigenous business capacity has been well recognized by other governments and by Chambers of Commerce.

The Canadian Federal Government's Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business (PSAB) has had its success attributed to several features including:

- Monitoring the compliance with and attainment of the performance objectives by Government departments and agencies in terms of: the total value, number of contracts awarded and other relevant characteristics, and reporting annually to the responsible Minister;
- All government departments and agencies are required to comply; and
- All Government Departments and Agencies must set multi-year performance objectives for contracting with Aboriginal business

A Model Aboriginal Procurement Policy Resolution<sup>9</sup> was approved at the spring 2011 Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Annual General Meeting.

At the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce Annual Gala Dinner on November 16, 2011, the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce, the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce co-signed an historic Model Aboriginal Procurement Policy Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

### ***Resolution (MBPR-034)***

**That the Manitoba Government, jointly with the Indigenous business community, including the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce, review best practices from other jurisdictions and within 3 years develop a new IPI including the following requirements:**

- 1. Remove the huge exclusions now in Manitoba's IPI policy**
- 2. 5% target for purchases from Indigenous businesses under the IPI**
- 3. Annual reporting, by department, for the level of procurement under the IPI**
- 4. Conduct communications and outreach to assist more Indigenous businesses to become aware of provincial Government procurement opportunities and expand their capacity to pursue them**
- 5. Take measures to structure RFPs in ways that allow smaller Indigenous businesses to partner or subcontract to the main bidder for a contract**

**This will create a more effective Indigenous Procurement Initiative for Manitoba that will increase economic benefits for all Manitobans in the long run.**

*Submitted by Aboriginal Chambers of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2018  
Renewed by Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, May 2022*

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<sup>9</sup> See <https://chambermaster.blob.core.windows.net/userfiles/UserFiles/chambers/9454/CMS/MOU/ICC-Aboriginal-Procurement-Policy-and-Approved-Resolution-for-MCC-AGM-May-2011.pdf>



## Canada's Harmonizing Federal Law with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (MBPR-038)

### *Issue*

The Indigenous Chamber of Commerce (ICC) focus is on the Indigenous business community throughout all of Manitoba. Its objectives include:

- To serve the Indigenous business community and express positions and opinions on business issues and other public issues relevant to Indigenous business, on behalf of its membership.
- To provide a forum for the Indigenous business community to develop policy positions and programs which contribute to the social, economic and physical quality of life in Indigenous and all communities in Manitoba and Canada.
- To promote a society and economy primarily based on competitive enterprise and on concern for the individual in our society.

The vast majority of ICC's members are Indigenous owned businesses. These businesses stand to gain significantly from improved economic development for Indigenous communities, along with all Manitobans and Canadians.

In the most tangible of terms, as noted in the November 25, 2016 article by the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board<sup>10</sup>, there is the \$2.8 billion gain available when First Nations achieve the same economic status of living as other Canadians. With Manitoba's population of about 1.3 million persons, and its share of the national First Nations population, it is about \$2,150 per Manitoban every year, forever. This is by far Manitoba's largest economic development opportunity and is why all Manitobans should support this resolution.

### **What is UNDRIP?**

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is a document that describes both individual and collective rights of Indigenous peoples around the world. It offers guidance to governments (and others) on creating cooperative relationships with Indigenous peoples based on the principles of:

- Equality
- Partnership
- Good faith, and
- Mutual respect

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<sup>10</sup> [http://naedb-cndea.com/reports/naedb\\_report\\_reconciliation\\_27\\_7\\_billion.pdf](http://naedb-cndea.com/reports/naedb_report_reconciliation_27_7_billion.pdf). This economic gain is very similar to that estimated by the "Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Education", 2009, by the Centre for the Study of Living Standards.



UNDRIP addresses the rights of Indigenous peoples on issues such as:

- Culture
- Identity
- Religion
- Language
- Health
- Education
- Community

UNDRIP has been adopted by nearly all the countries in the world. In 2010, Canada announced a statement of support for the principles of UNDRIP, but it was not until 2016 that Canada announced its full endorsement of UNDRIP and its intention to harmonize Canadian law with its principles.

The prior proposed Canadian legislation on implementation died when the 2019 Canadian election was called. After the election, the Federal Government announced its intention to introduce new legislation for implementing UNDRIP within a year.

As of June 2020, BC legislated the implementation of UNDRIP.

Bill C-15 has been introduced in Parliament. It needs to proceed.

### **Contentious Points**

As summarized by Senator Murray Sinclair, the focal point of discussion “has become the question of whether respecting Indigenous rights might be bad for Canada’s economy. The principle of free, prior and informed consent, in particular, has been a concern for some.”

Debate in the Senate noted, “that there are significant unanswered questions over the impact of this bill, not because of a lack of support for the aspirations of UNDRIP but because of the lack of clarity and agreement on what its implementation could mean to Canada.”

Some people are concerned that Indigenous communities would get increased/new rights that would impact natural resource development and other projects and industries (e.g. Impact Assessment, Fisheries, etc.)



However, many advise that the above is not the case:

- UNDRIP reaffirms what the Supreme Court of Canada has already said – that governments must consult Indigenous groups prior to making decisions that might impact their lives<sup>11</sup>.
- UNDRIP is in line with Section 35 of Canada’s Constitution that says, “The existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.”
- UNDRIP does not take any rights away from anyone else<sup>12</sup>.
- As Janes<sup>13</sup> and other legal experts say, many of the rights in UNDRIP are already protected by Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution, which guarantees treaty rights.

Government-to-government negotiations and agreements are already in place and/or continue to be negotiated and developed between local, provincial, national, and international governments. Where that joint decision-making fails, dispute resolution mechanisms are developed and invoked to prevent issues from going straight to court.

Yet while shared decision-making is not a novel concept, the requirement for shared decision making with Indigenous governments is largely absent in Canadian law outside of some specific agreements between governments and Indigenous governments, including but not limited to the development of natural resources.

### **UNDRIP Compared to ‘Duty to Consult and Accommodate’**

What is the difference between UNDRIP’s ‘free, prior, and informed consent’ and the Supreme Court’s ‘Duty to Consult and Accommodate;’ which is what already exists in Canadian law right now?

Some insights may be available from what BC has already implemented. Like Bill C-262 (the Federal Government’s legislation that failed in the Senate before the election), B.C.’s Bill 41 mandates:

- "Action plans" for each government department;
- Annual reporting on their progress toward fulfilling the rights specified in the declaration; and
- More importantly, government departments get the authority to share decision-making with Indigenous governments.

That removes a significant roadblock to "free, prior and informed consent" as spelled out in UNDRIP, and to complying with the Supreme Court’s many rulings on ‘Duty to Consult and Accommodate’.

In the past, Canadian courts have repeatedly affirmed the duty of governments to consult with and accommodate First Nations before making decisions. This has frequently been the basis of First Nations successful legal challenges.

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<sup>11</sup> Brenda Gunn, Assoc. Professor at the University of Manitoba at <https://globalnews.ca/news/6101723/undrip-indigenous-relations-canada/>

<sup>12</sup> Lori Campbell, director of the Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre at St. Paul’s University College, added “UNDRIP doesn’t take away human rights standards that the average citizens receive,” she told Global News. “It’s not an either-or situation.” <https://globalnews.ca/news/6101723/undrip-indigenous-relations-canada/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/implementing-undrip-bc-nwt-1.5344825>, Robert Janes, an expert in Indigenous law with JFK Law in Victoria



The Supreme Court of Canada has already declared that fulfilling the government's 'duty to consult and accommodate' includes gaining Indigenous peoples' consent. That happened first in 1997. It occurred again in 2004, when Canada's highest court clarified that consent may be required in relation to both proven and asserted-but-not-yet-proven rights.

The Supreme Court also stated in 2014 that "once aboriginal title is established, section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, permits incursions on it only with the consent of the aboriginal group."

Indigenous peoples' right to free, prior, and informed consent is not even new to international human rights law. UNDRIP is not even the first international instrument to have recognized this right. Several international human rights treaties that Canada is a party to – the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, for example – already recognize Indigenous peoples' right to consent, and the UN declaration simply reiterates this standard.

This is one of the reasons experts say that UNDRIP does not provide any new rights to First Nations. Many of the concerns by those that oppose implementation of the declaration are largely driven by the uncertainty of implementation and the changes to legislation that may be needed. If poorly designed and implemented, the Federal Government changes could hold significant negative impacts by only adding to the current lack of clarity that exists around the responsibilities of industry and government, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

### **Closing**

The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission stated in its 2015 final report: "We remain convinced that the United Nations Declaration provides the necessary principles, norms, and standards for reconciliation to flourish in twenty-first-century Canada."

By addressing the power imbalances between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state through UNDRIP, consent can become the key to ensuring that Indigenous peoples can exercise their fundamental human rights. Right now, too many Canadians are taking that for granted.

The Federal Government must support nation building and capacity building to enable Indigenous Peoples to fully participate in the decision-making process; and at the same time, ensure the legislation creates needed clarity and certainty for businesses, investors, and all Canadians.



***Resolution (MBPR-038)***

That the Province of Manitoba encourages the Canadian government to:

- **Pass Bill C-15 and implement UNDRIP by harmonizing all federal legislation, regulations, and practices to be consistent with the declaration**
- **Collaborate extensively with Indigenous communities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses and Chambers of Commerce to jointly develop the implementation action plans (including timeline) for each department**
- **Prior to proposing any legislative or regulatory change, it clarifies:**
  - **If its interpretation of the FPIC provisions are materially different from what is required to comply with the existing Supreme Court's 'duty to consult and accommodate'**
  - **What actions will be taken to coordinate with all provincial and territorial related implementation actions**
- **What the roles are for industry in a process to seek Indigenous peoples' consent**
- **Ensure there is sufficient annual reporting by each Federal Government department to create incentive and accountability for achieving the action plan objectives.**

Submitted by The Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce

Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2021



## Duty to Consult and Accommodate (MBPR-044)

### *Issue*

The Indigenous Chamber of Commerce (ICC) believes that a consistent approach by all parties regarding the duty to consult and accommodate would make a positive contribution to the business climate in Manitoba and improve the prospects for approval of projects going forward. The duty to consult and accommodate is recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, The report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the federal governments Bill C-15. We believe that our membership and all Manitobans would benefit if the Manitoba government were to update the current policy in consultation with Indigenous leadership.

The Indigenous Chamber of Commerce<sup>14</sup> (ICC) focus is on the Indigenous business community throughout all of Manitoba. The ICC objects include:

- Expressing positions and opinions on business issues and other public issues relevant to Indigenous business.
- Providing a forum for the Indigenous business community to develop policy positions and programs.
- Promoting a society and economy primarily based on competitive enterprise and on concern for the individual in our society.

The vast majority of ICC's members are Indigenous owned businesses. These businesses stand to gain significantly from improved economic development for Indigenous communities, along with all Manitobans and Canadians.

### **DUTY TO CONSULT AND ACCOMMODATE**

First Nations have long standing legal rights, many of which have only been confirmed and clarified by Canada's courts in the past decade or two, especially by the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC).

The Duty to Consult and Accommodate is one of the one of these rights. The Duty to Consult and Accommodate includes the responsibility of Canadian federal (and where appropriate also of provincial) governments to attempt to accommodate First Nations' requests, unless there is a valid reason not to do so. What constitutes a valid reason is ultimately decided by the courts if Canada imposes reasons not to accommodate and the First Nation disagrees.

Court rulings have confirmed that the Duty to Consult and Accommodate applies if a development project will have a significant impact for First Nations' traditional land use areas. First Nations have won over 200<sup>15</sup> court cases, many at the Supreme Court, confirming their legal rights.

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<sup>14</sup> Legal name is Indigenous Chamber of Commerce – Grand Rapids

<sup>15</sup> Resource Rulers: Fortune and Folly on Canada's Road to Resources, by Mr. Bill Gallagher





In many cases where a provincial or federal government has not consulted adequately, it has led to delays<sup>16 17</sup> in resource projects. A number of experts and institutes have recommended processes to improve<sup>18 19</sup> government performance.

Businesses and governments in Canada are having to adapt to these new dynamics. Several years ago, Perrin Beatty, CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce released a report titled, “Work with Indigenous People and Business to Clarify Duty to Consult.”

This report is the result of nearly a year of consultations with over 90 business and Indigenous representatives, legal experts and government officials. Its findings include that “...Clearly the federal government can improve this situation by living up to its commitments to improving Indigenous peoples’ quality of life as well as measuring and communicating its progress as it does so.... Businesses also know that they have a responsibility in this process,” said Mr. Beatty. “They need to regard consultation with Indigenous peoples as an investment in their businesses and that they can do a lot to help themselves by engaging early and often with Indigenous communities.”

Discussions in Manitoba by members of the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce confirm similar findings.

### **Capacity Building**

Building the capacity in First Nations communities to benefit from social and economic development partnerships involves more than the ability to review, assess and respond to proposals. It can also involve having the capital to become financial partners in projects and having the skilled people in their communities needed to ensure as many as possible benefit from employment opportunities.

Many economic development and business opportunities exist, especially in northern Manitoba that will create jobs and improved standards of living for First Nations and all Manitobans. Most of these are natural resource related projects, and most of the land on which the development will occur is Manitoba crown lands, requiring licensing for development by the provincial government. Thus, the provincial government has the responsibility to lead the process for Duty to Consult and Accommodate.

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<sup>16</sup> An Evaluation of Aboriginal, Government, and Mining Industry Relationships and Policies in Manitoba: Accessing Land for Mineral Exploration and Mine Development (a graduate student thesis, Clayton H. Riddell Faculty of Environment, Earth and Resources, University of Manitoba) by Gail Ferguson, March 25, 2015

<sup>17</sup> Executive Summary of: An Evaluation of Aboriginal, Government, and Mining Industry Relationships and Policies in Manitoba: Accessing Land for Mineral Exploration and Mine Development, by Gail Ferguson, April 20, 2015

<sup>18</sup> Comment: How to break the resource deadlock, by Mr. Bill Gallagher, Financial Post, June 13, 2014

<sup>19</sup> Aboriginal Canada and the Natural Resource Economy Series, by Ken Coates and Brian Lee Crowley, for the Macdonald Laurier Institute, May 2013, including four publications: #1 - How Canada’s Natural Resource Wealth Could Re-shape Relations with Aboriginal People; #2 – Canada and the First Nations-Cooperation or Conflict?; #3 - THE WAY OUT, New thinking about Aboriginal engagement and energy infrastructure to the West Coast; #4 - THE RULE AND ROLE OF LAW, The Duty to Consult, Aboriginal Communities, and the Canadian Natural Resource Sector



The Manitoba government is to be commended for the 2019 development of the Manitoba-First Nations Mineral Development Action Plan and Protocol. This is designed to define how Crown-Indigenous consultations will occur during all phases of mineral development, create certainty in order to advance projects in a timely way and ensure First Nations can be actively involved in all phases of development projects within their traditional territories.

And for the subsequent establishing of the Manitoba Mineral Development Fund (MMDF), with its own board of directors and general manager. However, it is focused only on mining development (excluding all other sectors such as forestry) and focused on north of parallel 53, excluding much of Manitoba. Also, it lacks adequate Indigenous representation; with no Indigenous directors on the board and only one on the application review committee.

### **Largest Economic Development Opportunity**

In the most tangible of terms, as noted in the November 25, 2016 article by the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board<sup>20</sup>, there is the \$2.8 billion gain available when First Nations achieve the same economic status of living as other Canadians. With Manitoba's population of about 1.3 million persons, and its share of the national First Nations population, it is about \$2,150/Manitoban every year, forever. This is by far Manitoba's largest economic development opportunity."

This impact is very similar to that estimated by the "Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Education", 2009, by the Centre for the Study of Living Standards<sup>21</sup>, which estimated an impact that would have amounted to about \$2,000/person in Manitoba. The credibility of the estimated impact is greatly strengthened by both studies reaching similar dollars per Manitoban, when done by different research organizations using different methodologies.

A 2019 study<sup>22</sup> identified, "Based on population alone, First Nations communities and Indigenous people in Manitoba will continue to grow as an economic force through to 2026. According to the Conference Board of Canada in its 2017 report titled "Maximizing Manitoba's Potential," Manitoba could become an economic growth leader in Canada, with its growth prospects overtaking those of neighbouring provinces as early as 2032. This future is possible with more youth in the workforce. The Indigenous population, younger than the overall Manitoba population, seems critical to realizing these prospects".

### **An Investment, Not an Expense**

Successful businesses reported in the Canadian Chamber study that they have recognized "That companies need to look at the value of thorough, sincere, consultation. In addition to the knowledge many Indigenous peoples have of the environment that complements proponents' scientific data.

Indigenous communities are sources of talent with their relative youth, traditional knowledge and proximity to project sites. Investing in them can often be very cost-competitive for a business." "We need

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<sup>20</sup> [http://naedb-cndea.com/reports/naedb\\_report\\_reconciliation\\_27\\_7\\_billion.pdf](http://naedb-cndea.com/reports/naedb_report_reconciliation_27_7_billion.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.csls.ca/reports/csls2009-3.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> 'Indigenous Contributions to the Manitoba Economy', by Brandon University, Rural Development Institute, 'Conclusion, Chapter 5 – Looking Forward', Page 204. <https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/files/2019/01/Indigenous-Economy-Report.pdf>



to recognize that we need Indigenous peoples if we're going to compete with countries with hundreds of millions of people," said one of those consulted during the Chamber's review project.

The province has often invested in economic development opportunities. The opportunity described above is one of the most attractive opportunities available to Manitobans.

### **Resolution of Long-Standing Issues – Unkept Promises**

Business people also acknowledged that, while they recognize their success depends upon how they engage and consult with Indigenous peoples, outreach may not always be welcomed.

"We need to recognize that companies are up against more than two centuries of the reality of the Crown's representatives trying to wipe out Indigenous peoples and their cultures," a Thunder Bay businessperson advised the Canadian Chamber.

Sometimes businesses find their projects run into trouble not because Indigenous communities oppose the project but because they want to make a point with the Crown regarding un-kept promises.

During the Canadian Chamber's research, businesspeople advised that Indigenous peoples cannot be criticized for taking the opportunity presented by the consultation process to seek the resolution of long-standing, and often fundamental issues including potable water, housing and education. "These quality-of-life issues aren't being addressed, and they don't see a path forward for them. I don't begrudge them taking advantage of the regulatory process to try and do so," said a Calgary business.

Indigenous and business representatives also advised that rare is the Indigenous community that does not want to participate in economic development and to be self-sufficient. Yet, despite constitutional recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights and billions of dollars spent on programs and commissions, the social and economic situations of many Indigenous peoples remain appalling.

It is, according to the Indigenous representatives, because "root causes" are not being tackled. "It's like having a decaying tooth," said one. "You're polishing it up but not treating it. Nobody has really taken the time to examine why programs aren't working despite all the resources being devoted to them. One example of how bad things are is that dozens of First Nations communities have been on boil-water advisories for 20-plus years."

Many First Nations are supportive of natural resource development that is environmentally sustainable, and which create benefits to First Nations, and wish to ensure these rights are recognized and addressed. First Nations communities and businesses (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous owned) wishing to develop a new project are seeking clarity for the process to be used that will meet the requirements of the Duty to Consult and Accommodate.



### ***Resolution (MBPR-044)***

That the provincial government:

- **Ensure that its consultation frameworks and policies are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous people.**
- **Provide funding for Indigenous communities to conduct education, capacity building programs and to develop community consultation protocols**
- **That the Manitoba government, in cooperation with the federal government where appropriate, create the opportunity for Indigenous capacity building including such options as:**
  - **Tools to help Indigenous communities develop their own consultation guidelines for proponents based on their histories, rights and lands; in addition to the existing MMDF Mineral Development focus. This should have a focus on Indigenous communities and businesses jointly leading the clarified consultation process.**
  - **Seeking the views of business and Indigenous representatives on a proponent and government financed, arm's-length fund, that would be available for Indigenous communities to hire the capacity they do not have.**
  - **Identifying Indigenous led natural resource development opportunities.**
  - **Assisting Indigenous communities to establish increased access to capital, for example, business loan guarantees and credit rating assistance.**
  - **Helping Indigenous communities document their resources (natural, human, financial, etc.).**
- **Continue to consult (with the consultation framework being consistent with UNDRIP) with Indigenous communities in developing and adopting their own community specific Mineral Development Protocol<sup>23</sup>.**
- **Evaluate the effectiveness of the Mineral Development Protocols that have been established.**
- **Ensure a significant portion of the MMDF board of directors are Indigenous.**
- **Establish a revamped group within the Manitoba Government to communicate and support building knowledge/capacity around the mining development process at each stage of the long process of exploration through to development, and of the opportunities within the mining supply chain and economic partnerships.**
- **That an Assembly of Key Stakeholders be held before mid-2022, to create an Action Plan and Time-Line for the above actions.**

*Submitted by The Indigenous Chamber of Commerce  
Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2022*

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<sup>23</sup> See Manitoba-First Nations Mineral Development Protocol Template at <https://www.manitoba.ca/iem/mines/fnmdp.html>