



New Brunswick Chambers Launch WorkSafeNB Letter-Writing Campaign

For Immediate Release

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Earlier today, chambers of commerce from across New Brunswick launched a letter-writing campaign that encourages their members to write to WorkSafeNB and the provincial government to inform them that soaring costs to the province's workers' compensation system are having damaging effects on their businesses and the economy.

"An effective and sustainable workers' compensation system is of critical importance to both employees and employers in New Brunswick," said Carol O'Reilly, CEO of the Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce. "Our member businesses consistently tell us that their employees are their greatest resource. The continuing escalation of costs to the system since mid-2015 are a major concern for all businesses in the province, not only for their own operations, but also for the continued sustainability of WorkSafeNB."

WorkSafeNB rates increased by an average of 33% in 2017 and officials have warned that an increase in 2018 could be even greater.

"The costs associated with doing business in New Brunswick have dramatically increased in the past couple of years, with an increase to minimum wage, HST, income tax, property tax and now WorkSafe premiums, amongst other costs," added David Duplisea, CEO of the Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce. "Employers are now looking at another WorkSafe hike and carbon price in 2018 and a CPP expansion in 2019. It is important that the correct balance be struck that provides employees with the right benefits while ensuring that employers are able to continue to fund the system."

Businesses in New Brunswick are facing a number of external and internal pressures on their operations. Increases to payroll taxes such as WorkSafeNB premiums are particularly difficult to absorb because they are based on hours worked by employees, not due to an increase in revenue or profit.

"This is an issue that affects businesses in every industry and every part of the province," said Krista Ross, CEO of the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce. "Employers are telling us that the effect of rising costs are reduced hours or jobs, holding off on investing in the business, increasing prices for customers and potentially business closures. The situation is very serious and we encourage all New Brunswick businesses to speak up and make sure your voice is heard."

A stakeholder meeting was called by WorkSafeNB on April 19, 2017 with both employer and employee representatives in attendance.



“The stakeholders meeting on April 19th was a step in the right direction and demonstrated that business needs to be engaged more closely with WorkSafe so that all parties can better understand the cause of the spike in costs and work together to create solutions,” added Ross. “With more detailed and transparent information such as type of injuries, industries most affected, and geographical data, employers can do their part to address particular issues. Meanwhile, Worksafe and the government can focus their efforts on solving the most urgent problems while maintaining a system that is fair to employees and affordable and sustainable for the businesses who entirely fund the system.”

The campaign can be found here: <http://www.thechambersj.com/voice-your-concerns-WorkSafeNB.html>

*With more than 950 members who employ over 25,000 people, the **Fredericton Chamber of Commerce** is one of Atlantic Canada’s largest chambers of commerce. A dynamic business organization, the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce is actively engaged in policy development that affects the competitiveness of our members and of the Canadian business environment. The Chamber’s vision is ‘Community Prosperity Through Business’.*

*The **Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce** is the voice of the business community for more than 750 businesses representing more than 32,000 employees in Moncton, Dieppe and Riverview and the surrounding region.*

*The **Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce** is a nationally accredited business organization dedicated to fostering an economic climate that enhances growth, prosperity, and an improved quality of life in the community. With close to 800 businesses, representing the interests of approx.35,000 people, The Chamber is a dynamic advocate and the principal voice for the business community of Greater Saint John. It offers a variety of programs, activities, services, and networking opportunities designed to enhance the business prospects of members and the overall business climate of the area.*

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