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Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Western Canada Growth Strategy 5 Qs - SCC Submission NOVEMBER 13 2018

Hello Western Economic Diversification Canada,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Western Canada Growth Strategy engagement paper. Please see attached a PDF document containing our responses to each of the five questions.

The SCC would welcome a meeting with officials from WEDC to discuss our thoughts and recommendations in greater detail.

Thanks.

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Western Economic Diversification Canada:
Western Canada Growth Strategy

Submitted by: Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce

What does a stronger western Canadian economy look like in 10 years from now?

The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce believes a stronger western Canadian economy ten years from now will require increased trade diversification. The uncertainty over the past year around the renegotiation of NAFTA 2.0 illustrated the importance of not being overly-reliant on any one particular export market. Continuing to aggressively pursue trade diversification into newly emerging markets with a growing middle class will be necessary to strengthen western Canada over the long-term. A stronger western Canadian economy in a decade's time will require that our producers get their resources to market in a timely and expedient manner so they can receive the full value for their products. This requires a regulatory process for resource development projects that is science-based, transparent, predictable, clear, and assures certainty to investors.

Finally, while the traditional bulk commodity export growth model (where the raw commodity is sold overseas and processed elsewhere and then some of it is sold back to Canadian consumers) has historically served western Canada well, to better compete in the 21st century global economy, embracing a *value-added* supply chain model (where a bulk commodity is harvested and then refined or processed at a facility here and the finished product is sold both at home and abroad) will be essential to a strengthened western Canadian economy in the future. The SCC supports the Protein Industries Canada supercluster initiative and believes its efforts will play a major part in this transition.

What are the best ways to spur new growth in western Canada?

As referenced in our answer to the question above, continuing to aggressively pursue trade diversification in newly emerging global markets with a growing middle class will certainly spur new growth in the region. In addition, making businesses aware of the many benefits and opportunities associated with existing free trade agreements, such as the *Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement* (CETA) and the *Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership* (CPTPP) will also encourage incremental economic growth. Third, encouraging immigrants and newcomers to settle long-term across western Canada by encouraging a more dedicated collective effort around language and skills training is also an important part of spurring economic growth in the region.

What will help the Indigenous economy continue to grow?

The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce advocates the Federal Government provide enhanced and targeted funding for on-reserve K-12 schools to ensure parity with provincially-funded schools. Eliminating the funding gap between on-reserve and off-reserve schools will contribute to shrinking the high-school graduation rate gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Furthermore, governments should ensure all

unnecessary regulatory barriers to economic development for indigenous-owned enterprises (especially band-owned) are reduced or removed after extensive discussion with those entities. Finally, governments and large businesses should be encouraged to engage in procurement and employment-related opportunities with Indigenous-owned businesses and Indigenous workers.

How can we improve economic participation in the west of underrepresented groups, including women, youth, and new immigrants?

To improve the economic participation in western Canada among new immigrants, governments should make a concerted effort to streamline credential recognition, particularly for those immigrants who possess competencies, skills, credentials, etc. that are highly sought after by employers in the labour market. The objective should be to integrate new immigrants into the labour market and society as seamlessly as possible. To encourage economic participation among youth in western Canada, the Saskatchewan Chamber recommends the creation of mandatory, stand-alone classes on both financial literacy and youth entrepreneurship within the K-12 school system. In order to better improve economic participation among women in western Canada, we need to promote and celebrate Canadian female entrepreneurs and their successes, as well as sustain successful programs like Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan (WESK).

How can governments, industry, and western Canadians work together to grow the regional economy?

A good first step would be to put a renewed focus on the *New West Partnership Trade Agreement* (NWPT). The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce continues to support the NWPT and its mission to create an open common market of more than 11 million people through the reduction of trade barriers. We encourage the signatory provinces to respect both the spirit and letter of the agreement.