

From: Dara Hrytzak <dara@saskatoonchamber.com>
Sent: Friday, November 16, 2018 3:38 PM
To: Engages-Mobilisation (WD/DEO) <wd.engages-mobilisation.deo@canada.ca>
Cc: Darla Lindbjerg <darla@saskatoonchamber.com>
Subject: Submission regarding Western Economic Growth Strategy

Hello,
Please find attached the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce submission in response to the WED Western Economic Growth Strategy.

Thank you,
Dara

November 15, 2018

Western Economic Diversification Canada
c/o: Western Economic Growth Strategy Engagement
Suite 1500, 9700 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4H7

RE: Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce response to the **Western Canada Growth Strategy**

On behalf of the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, I would like to commend the work of Western Economic Diversification (WED) on engaging stakeholders about the future of western Canada's economy and facilitating an important discussion on the development of an effective strategy for economic growth.

The Chamber is the voice of business in Saskatoon. We are a grassroots organization that works to promote prosperity in business, which in turn provides the foundation for a healthy and strong community. Our mandate is to make Saskatoon the best business climate in Canada, and therefore, our interests align with the *Western Canada Growth Strategy* – to grow the economy and attract investment.

Positioned as one of the fastest growing cities in western Canada, Saskatoon is poised to play a vital role in the long-term success of the western Canadian economic landscape. Our focus on promoting local business growth and economic development supports the broader vision and goal of ensuring the advancement of western Canadian economic performance.

In response to the five questions posed in the engagement paper, we have drafted the attached comments for your consideration. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute our thoughts on the development of this strategy and we look forward to working with WED as it builds and implements its strategy for western Canadian economic growth.

Kindest regards,



Darla Lindbjerg
President & CEO

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

- Trade certainty and diversified export markets for western Canadian goods and services.
- Uptake of foreign direct investment, where western Canada leads the nation in attracting FDI.
- Reliable infrastructure to ensure steady movement of commodities, including pipelines and rail.
- Leadership in thriving new markets, including innovation and emerging technologies, clean-tech and agri-food.
- A diverse and engaged workforce that is appropriately skilled for technological advancements in the workplace.
- Low unemployment rates for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous population.
- Steady annual population growth.

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

- Ensure competitive tax rates for business at all levels.
- Alleviate regulatory red tape that hinders development.
- Ensure trade diversity and certainty – not only internationally, but also inter-provincially.
- Encourage investment in emerging technologies and new markets.
- Foster entrepreneurship and the development of SMEs.
- Connect educational institutions with industry to engage and prepare youth for jobs of the future.
- Promote immigration to the region.

3) *What will help the Indigenous economy continue to grow?*

- Connecting with local Indigenous businesses to hear their success stories and develop opportunities for growth and partnership.
- Developing procurement strategies that include Indigenous business participation.
- Promoting employment and skills development opportunities.

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

- Develop elementary and secondary programs that prepare students for technologically advanced positions.
- Offer language programs to assist new immigrants with language skills.
- Promote programs that foster women entrepreneurs and business success.

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

In order to grow the regional economy, we need to work together to ensure open dialogue on both the opportunities that will promote growth, as well as the challenges that hinder growth. Over the next decade, governments, industry, and western Canadians will need to work together to nurture positive local business environments that will in turn provide the foundation for growing the broader regional economy. Key issues that will require collaboration between stakeholders include continued efforts on ensuring both interprovincial and international trade certainty, new market opportunities for local products and services, and preparing a diverse labour force for the future.