

Ontario Business Matters

The 2021 Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Ontario Chamber Network Federal Election Campaign

Ontario is Canada’s economic engine, responsible for almost 40% of Canada’s GDP. Over the past 17 months, communities and businesses across the province have been adversely affected by the pandemic and public health measures put in place to curb the spread of COVID-19. As Ontario’s economy continues to reopen and recover, Canada’s next Parliament must adopt pragmatic solutions to support Ontario business competitiveness as an important driver of economic recovery. Simply put, issues and concerns related to Ontario business need to be front and centre this federal election.

When businesses across Ontario prosper, our communities and Canada prosper as well:

Ontario is home to almost **50%** of all employees in high tech, financial services, and other knowledge-intensive industries.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and have been hardest hit by the pandemic. Roughly **40%** of Canada’s small businesses are concentrated in Ontario.

Ontario is the number one trading partner with 19 US states and the second largest trading partner with 9 others, generating **\$390 billion** in two-way trade in 2018.

Longstanding issues – including barriers to interprovincial trade, relatively low immigration quotas, workforce development and digital infrastructure gaps – must be addressed to strengthen the province’s long-term resilience and well-being. Special attention must be placed on policies that facilitate equitable recovery for small businesses, communities, and sectors that have been most severely impacted by the pandemic, including women, Indigenous peoples, racialized people, and businesses in the tourism, retail, and food service sectors.

In doing so, policymakers must also confront the other historic crisis facing our communities: climate change. The recent report released by the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change calls on governments around the world to take immediate steps to curb rises in global temperatures. Ontario is uniquely positioned to serve as a global leader in cleantech and sustainable innovation, with our highly skilled workforce and expertise in everything from electric vehicles to nuclear power.

Throughout the federal election period, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and its 60,000 members in over 155 communities across the province will underscore why Ontario business matters. **With the collective voice of the Ontario Chamber Network, we will highlight policy recommendations that reflect the needs of Ontario businesses under the following pillars:**



Workforce recovery and business competitiveness.

As we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis, Ontario businesses need strategic support from the federal government to strengthen the key enablers of competitiveness, including access to interprovincial and global trade, capital, and talent.



Healthy people and prosperous communities.

COVID-19 has exposed and amplified challenges for those who call Ontario home. To ensure an inclusive post-pandemic recovery in our province, Canada needs to invest in community well-being through reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, child care, and health care.



Resilient infrastructure.

Infrastructure connects Ontarians to jobs, education, goods, services, and the people they love. The federal government should be a critical partner in building modern, low-carbon infrastructure to drive our economic recovery.