

# WINDSOR-ESSEX REGIONAL Chamber of Commerce

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## MEDIA RELEASE

October 19, 2016

### The Success of Small Business Will Determine the Success of Ontario's Economy: New Report by Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce Kicks-Off 2016 Small Business Week



Windsor, ON – Today, to mark Small Business Week 2016, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) in partnership with the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce (WERCC), released the report *Obstacles and Opportunities for Small Business in Ontario*. The report highlights the contributions of small businesses to the provincial economy, while also identifying, and offering solutions to, the most pressing challenges that small business owners face.

The report's recommendations are the result of detailed consultations over the course of six months held by 25 chambers of commerce and boards of trade with hundreds of small business owners throughout the province as part of the OCC's Small Business Too Big To Ignore campaign. The consultation with Windsor-Essex small business occurred August 9 at the WERCC.

"In Windsor-Essex, certainly the key issue for small business is the rising cost of doing business in Ontario," said WERCC President & CEO Matt Marchand. "This report speaks directly to that key concern and offers recommendations," added Marchand.

The report also highlights that businesses with fewer than 100 employees make up 98 percent of total Ontario businesses and two-thirds of private sector employment in Ontario. They contribute approximately 28 percent to the provincial GDP and created 87.7 percent of the new jobs nationally from 2005 to 2012. Given the significance of small businesses, the OCC and the WERCC urges the government to take immediate action to implement the following recommendations in the near term:

1. Ensure affordable energy use for small business

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2. Work with all levels of government to establish a regulatory concierge service to assist small businesses in understanding, navigating, and achieving compliance with relevant regulatory requirements (similar to what the WERCC has suggested for, as an example: asking City Hall to help local developers with permits)
3. Develop a single access point for all government-funded workforce, training, and employment services
4. Conduct a publicly available cost of doing business analysis in Ontario

“Small businesses in Ontario are being held back by a diverse set of challenges that need to be addressed by all three levels of government,” said Allan O’Dette, OCC President & CEO. “We are encouraging the provincial government to implement our report’s recommendations so that we can ensure that our economy will have sustained economic growth for many years to come.”

These recommendations will feature prominently in the WERCC’s and OCC’s work leading up to the 2018 provincial election.

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