

Office of the President and
Chief Executive Officer

Cabinet du président
et chef de la direction

December 5, 2014

Hon. Tony Clement, P.C., M.P.
President of the Treasury Board
140 O'Connor Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0R5

Dear Minister:

In September, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce concluded its 85th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Charlottetown, PEI. A highlight of the Canadian Chamber's AGM is the Policy Session, where the resolutions submitted by local chambers of commerce and boards of trade from across Canada are debated and voted on by accredited delegates. Once approved, these resolutions become policy of the Canadian Chamber for the following three years.

In 2014, our delegates issued a clear and decisive national policy mandate that we intend to pursue vigorously with the federal government over the coming months. Our renewed national policy mandate includes the following issue falls within your portfolio:

Putting Federal Government Data to Work for SMEs

Data mining/analytics gives SMEs new tools to allow them to identify new markets and customers, clients they may be at risk of losing, etc.

The federal government's data.gc.ca website offers a portal to federal data and provides links to other levels of government (where available). While businesses appreciate the single point of access to a broad range of government data, some users have been frustrated by:

- Actions having to be repeated, for example downloading data for one municipality and then having to go back to the beginning to access the same information for another city
- Datasets from different government agencies and departments having different layouts and formats, requiring users to spend a lot of time converting them before they can be used

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- Datasets using different statistical standards, for example, some being grouped according geographic regions/ municipalities, while others are grouped according to economic regions
- Some datasets being out-of-date
- Some datasets being incompatible with Microsoft Office TM
- Some of the links provided not working

The Canadian Chamber recommends that the federal government:

1. Undertake to present its data in a consistently formatted manner;
2. Work with the provinces/territories and municipalities to adopt a consistent format in dataset presentation;
3. Release all data, with the exception of data that threatens privacy or public security, in formats that can be easily read and manipulated by computers;
4. Work with the provinces/territories and municipalities to release the data with a license that gives users the right to use and modify the data, merge it with other data, and distribute it for commercial and non-commercial purposes without restrictions; and
5. Fully implement Open Data in Canada by the end of 2016.

We understand that a few post-secondary institutions in Canada are looking at this issue and could be of assistance to the federal government.

A copy of the complete text of this resolution is attached and we would be pleased to discuss it with you or your staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Perrin Beatty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P".

Perrin Beatty
President and Chief Executive Officer

Attachment