



fccq | Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec

Taking Action and Making a Difference

TEAMING UP WITH GOVERNMENTS TO DRIVE CHANGE

The FCCQ maintains an ongoing dialogue with elected officials and senior civil servants to put forward positive solutions to advance economic development. The FCCQ is consulted on important decisions that affect businesses. This preventive approach helps protect against the adoption of counterproductive regulations.

In Québec, the FCCQ:

- organized 21 working sessions with several ministers on issues that directly or indirectly impact the business community
- hosted a *Rendez-vous politique* event with, among others, Québec finance minister Carlos Leitão

The FCCQ is also actively engaged at the federal level. The meetings and work sessions it took part in this fall, including those with key ministers, have had some important outcomes for Québec:

- Limitation of the adverse effects of restrictive measures imposed on the hiring of temporary immigrants
- Upcoming FCCQ visit by a trade commissioner from the Department of Foreign Affairs to provide practical advice to businesses
- The FCCQ administers the Young Canada Works in Both Official Languages program for Québec, which provides funding to employers to hire summer students

And that's just the beginning!

Highlights

85	new members
43	press releases
35 th	annual Mercuriades Awards
21	meetings with Québec government ministers
19	sector committees, with more than 380 corporate members and several chambers of commerce
17	open letters published
12	FCCQeXpress newsletters sent to nearly 5,000 subscribers

7

briefs

7

private *Rendez-vous* events

7

talks/panels

2

FCCQ resolutions adopted by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC)

2

"parliamentary days," one in Ottawa and one in Québec City

1

Journée réseau event

1

tour of Alberta's hydrocarbon industry

1

tour of more than 50 chambers of commerce

AND THE FCCQ IS GETTING A MAKEOVER WITH A BRAND-NEW VISUAL IDENTITY!



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The FCCQ: Your Partner in Change

The Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec (FCCQ) is an active force in promoting economic development throughout Québec and a go-to authority for provincial and federal policy-makers. As your partner in change for more than 100 years, the FCCQ:

- fosters economic development for business operating in every sector and region
- advocates wealth creation, driven primarily by an entrepreneurial culture and a spirit of innovation, to improve quality of life, standard of living and community development
- supports, builds on and acts as a facilitator for a Québec-wide network of chambers of commerce

Mid-Year Report 2014-2015

With its extensive network of more than 140 chambers of commerce and 1,100 corporate members, the FCCQ represents over 60,000 businesses and 150,000 businesspeople involved in all sectors of the economy throughout Québec.

As the province's premier business network, the FCCQ serves as both a federation and a provincial chamber of commerce. Its members—be they chambers of commerce or businesses—share a common goal: to foster an innovative, competitive business environment.

THE POWER OF THE NETWORK

Chambers of commerce

AN INFLUENTIAL NETWORK, AN ENGAGED BUSINESS COMMUNITY

- Adaptation of communications to enable chambers of commerce to take a position on broader issues, in accordance with their economic priorities: revival of the Plan Nord, intercity transport, status of local development centres, school board mergers, review of government programs, increase in minimum wage, budget statements, future of the Arnaud mining project and so forth
- Implementation of statutory meetings of the heads of chambers of commerce from across Québec (Forum des chambres) to promote the exchange of information on local and regional economic issues
- Introduction of a new format for board meetings to set aside time at the beginning of every meeting to discuss regional matters
- Mailout of board meeting summaries to all chambers of commerce
- Maintaining and promoting partnerships with the Yellow Pages Group, the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST) and the Prêt à Entreprendre program

The FCCQ at the heart of decision-making

FCCQ SITS ON THE BOARDS OF THE:

- Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST)
- Commission des partenaires du marché du travail (CPMT)
- Conseil de gestion de l'assurance parentale (CGAP)
- American Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE)
- Chamber of Commerce Executives of Canada (CCEC)
- Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC)
- Chambers of Commerce Group Insurance Plan

THE FCCQ IS ALSO AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF:

- various CSST committees (audit, investment, corporate governance, budget) and subcommittees
- the negotiating table of the Comité consultatif du travail et de la main-d'oeuvre, Ministère du Travail du Québec
- the working committee on measures governing the construction industry, Ministère du Travail du Québec
- the working committee on measures governing employment agencies, Revenu Québec
- the advisory committee on tax compliance, Revenu Québec
- the advisory committee on the provision of electronic services to businesses, Revenu Québec
- the advisory subcommittee on income, Revenu Québec certification – Construction
- various Question Retraite committees
- the advisory committee on regulatory and administrative relief

ACTION INFLUENCE INITIATIVE ENGAGEMENT ACHIEVEMENT

For sound public finances and an investment-friendly business climate

DRIVING HOME THE IMPORTANCE OF REBALANCING THE BUDGET

The FCCQ firmly believes that everyone has to chip in if we are to build a prosperous future for generations to come. The government must make difficult choices to cultivate a strong economy and stimulate wealth and job creation over the longer term.

TAKING ACTION ON PUBLIC FINANCES

- The FCCQ spearheaded a major consultation and rallied the business community to identify and propose potential solutions to reduce government spending, as part of the work done by the Godbout and Robillard commissions
- The FCCQ wrote and submitted a brief dealing with three major themes: a taxation system conducive to wealth creation, support for businesses and economic development measures, and government reform, including a broader participation of the private sector
- The FCCQ released a number of public statements in favour of greater budgetary rigour and eliminating the deficit, illustrating its proposals using a variety of themes
- Several measures that have been put forward by the government to clean up public finances have been inspired by the FCCQ's recommendations

SUPPORT FOR THE PRINCIPLE THAT BALANCING THE BOOKS IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The FCCQ's arguments have been heard loud and clear. Nearly every sector and stakeholder—entrepreneurs, retirees, union members and more—is being called upon to do their part to turn the current situation around. In addition, a resolution in favour of the bill on the financial health and sustainability of municipal defined benefit pension plans was unanimously adopted by the FCCQ's board of directors.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST INCREASING THE TAX BURDEN ON INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANIES

As a result, two-thirds of the effort required to achieve zero-deficit status will come from government spending cuts.

MAKING THE CASE FOR A MODERATE CONTRIBUTION BY BUSINESSES TO IMPROVING PUBLIC FINANCES

The FCCQ has emphasized the necessity of keeping key investment and economic development measures in place. After slashing business tax credits by 20% in the June 2014 budget, the government pledged to refrain from further scale-backs in business assistance programs in its economic update in December.

ACTION INFLUENCE INITIATIVE ENGAGEMENT ACHIEVEMENT

For the orderly development and use of our natural and energy resources

SOCIÉTÉ DU PLAN NORD

Through its participation in parliamentary committees and its numerous communications at the provincial and regional level, the FCCQ, in collaboration with its member chambers of commerce, supported the implementation of the Société du Plan Nord, which is tasked to:

- promote the orderly development of northern Québec
- manage the complexities inherent in economic activities in this area
- serve as an all-in-one resource for attracting and implementing development projects
- spur infrastructure-related decisions
- maximize development project spinoffs
- provide a framework for the social acceptance process
- oversee royalty-sharing
- facilitate access to northern Québec

ARNAUD MINING PROJECT

The FCCQ took action to support the Arnaud mining project and unanimously adopted a resolution to lobby the Québec government to implement the necessary structure to expedite its growth.

PARTICIPATION IN BAPE HEARINGS

In a context where the economic sector must make its voice heard with regard to energy projects, the FCCQ stressed the importance of the following initiatives and presented briefs along these lines to the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE):

- Dumont nickel mining project in Launay
- Shale gas exploration and development in the Utica formation in the St. Lawrence Lowlands
- Uranium exploration
- Hydro-Québec's 735-kV Chamouchouane-Bout de-l'Île transmission line project

OIL EXPLORATION

The FCCQ has enthusiastically supported the exploration and potential development of oil resources in Québec, leading to the startup or resumption of drilling in the Gaspé Peninsula and Anticosti Island.

SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

FCCQ members are called upon to propose potential solutions to the government to secure public buy-in. The FCCQ is asking the government to implement a clear, stable and predictable legislative and regulatory framework and to redefine its approach to working with proponents of major development projects. The FCCQ feels that the responsibility for social acceptance should be shared by businesses and the government, which has a mandate to defend Québec's interests.

ACTION INFLUENCE INITIATIVE ENGAGEMENT ACHIEVEMENT

For strategic investments in infrastructure and transportation

INFRASTRUCTURE

The FCCQ is committed to lobbying governments to maintain a high level of investment in infrastructure rehabilitation and development

MARITIME STRATEGY

Given the impact and strategic role that the maritime sector can play in Québec's economic development, the FCCQ has brought together key industry stakeholders to influence how the Québec government's maritime strategy plays out:

- Setup of an ad hoc maritime strategy committee
- Preparation of a brief
- Meetings with various ministries involved in maritime transportation and related areas
- Jean D'Amour, Québec Minister for Transport and the Implementation of the Maritime Strategy, was a featured guest at one of the FCCQ's Rendez-vous politique events

For a skilled, available workforce

1% LAW

Although it would prefer to see the so-called 1% law repealed altogether, the FCCQ has accepted the government's decision to keep it in place and is therefore rallying behind the idea of having the Workforce Skills Development and Recognition Fund be used to encourage and help businesses hire a much higher number of interns from vocational, technical and university programs. Because the fund is under the purview of the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail (CPMT), of which the FCCQ is a member, the FCCQ will make sure that the government modifies the CPMT's mandate and governance structure accordingly.

GOVERNMENT BIDS

The FCCQ has organized several working sessions with deputy ministers responsible for infrastructure and government contracts:

- to relax the "lowest qualified bidder" rule to take into account special expertise and the quality of the work and services to be provided
- to resume a constructive dialogue between businesses and public administration

CONSULTING ENGINEERING

The recovery of the consulting engineering sector is a top priority for the FCCQ, which has developed a positioning strategy to influence policy-makers and public opinion in an effort to restore this crucial sector of the Québec economy.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

The overall cost of air transportation and regional airport operations are among the issues being looked into by the FCCQ, with the support of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC):

- Exchanges with the government of Canada
- Adoption of a joint resolution: "Reduce Costs to Improve Canadian Aviation Competitiveness"

REDUCTION IN RED TAPE

Aware of the need to streamline the procedures involved in recruiting temporary immigrants and selecting permanent immigrants, the FCCQ prepared a written set of arguments focusing on this theme.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

The FCCQ is working actively with the Commission de la santé et sécurité du travail (CSST) and has organized a tour of chambers of commerce across Québec to encourage employers to lead the way in workplace health and safety.

The FCCQ has also been actively involved in the following areas in the past six months:

REVENU QUÉBEC

- Two working sessions with high-level civil servants from Revenu Québec to put an end to certain audit practices deemed excessive and detrimental to business
- Multiple efforts by the FCCQ to ensure that employment agencies are not subject to cumbersome new regulations

AGRI-FOOD SECTOR

- Initiatives designed to promote a more substantial contribution by the Québec agri-food sector to public health and to showcase local food
- Pressures to honour the compensation promised to Québec cheesemakers as a result of the Canada-European Union free trade agreement

OVERREGULATION

- Efforts to discourage the government from adopting a surtax on specific foods and beverages
- Position adopted by the FCCQ board against municipal by-laws designed to limit or ban drive-through windows at fast-food establishments

TOURISM

- Review of the mandate and action plan of the FCCQ's tourism committee
- Meetings with the Québec tourism minister's office to discuss the sector's business model
- Meeting with the tourism sector's leading associations

HEALTHCARE

- Publication of several open letters in major media outlets concerning the role of the private sector in terms of the accessibility of healthcare, improved wait times and services for the elderly
- Presentation of a brief on the bill to modify the organization and governance of the health and social services network, in particular by abolishing regional agencies

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS TRANSFER

- Representation at 17 entrepreneurship round tables, the CCC and the provincial and federal governments to secure their support for eliminating a tax hurdle for business ownership transfer, especially in the case of transfers between related persons
- Adoption at a special general meeting of the FCCQ of a resolution reiterating the importance of resolving the issue of family business transfers
- Efforts to raise the awareness of the Minister for Small and Medium Enterprises, Regulatory Streamlining and Regional Economic Development at the Journée réseau event

- Communications with Québec government authorities to develop an action plan aimed at facilitating and stimulating business transfer and succession

ONLINE SALES AND TAXATION

- Provincial and federal lobbying efforts to draw attention to the loss in tax revenues resulting from flaws in the current tax system
- Proposals as to avenues to be explored to enable the governments to collect GST/HST on all online sales made in Canada by foreign merchants

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT—CARBON MARKET

- Efforts to implement measures to scale back Phase 2 of the carbon market program; these were rewarded with the announcement of an extra transport cost deduction for SMEs in the manufacturing sector (\$12 million) and a reduction in SMEs' contribution rate for the Health Services Fund (\$162 million)

GREEN ECONOMY

- Proposal submitted to the government to promote the development of a green building industry in Québec
- Organization of a regional tour of chambers of commerce to highlight the added value of green buildings