

Mid-Year Report

2013 - 2014



fccq

Fédération des chambres
de commerce du Québec

What the FCCQ is
doing for you

General context

In the wake of the adoption of a new strategic plan, the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec has committed to a series of initiatives designed to promote investment and business growth to:

- Make economic development the cornerstone of the FCCQ's strategic plan.
- Position the FCCQ as an association that represents every economic sector and every region of Québec.

The FCCQ has been operating in a political environment marked by a minority provincial government that has held consultations on a wide array of topics. The FCCQ has sought to be proactive with regard to major economic issues, particularly those involving industrial policy and natural resources, and has put forward comments and proposals about several matters affecting regional and provincial economic development.

The FCCQ has endeavoured to engage the business community and its network of chambers of commerce to maximize its influence on governmental decisions and positions. And it has stepped up its interaction with the federal government, both directly and through the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

This document summarizes the efforts made by the FCCQ from an economic development perspective at both the provincial and the regional level.

Public finance and an investment-friendly business environment

KEY ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE FCCQ	INFLUENCE OR RESULTS
Driving home of the importance of balancing the government's books as quickly as possible at various meetings with the finance minister and top government officials.	The FCCQ's lobbying has prompted the government to rein in spending and avoid tax hikes. The zero deficit report was disappointing.
Numerous efforts vis-à-vis the economy and finance minister and high-ranking government officials to advocate for a business and investment-friendly environment.	Statements made by the premier stressing that the economy is a priority. Government economic policies in response to the need to spur investment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial policy • Export policy • Research and innovation policy
Involvement in two Revenu Québec committees aimed at improving relations and electronic communications between Revenu Québec and businesses.	
Meeting with the President and Chief Executive Officer of Revenu Québec.	Active pursuit of solutions and corrective measures with Revenu Québec officials.

Support for manufacturing and innovation

KEY ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE FCCQ	INFLUENCE OR RESULTS
Work sessions with deputy ministers and the minister responsible for drafting the industrial policy.	A number of proposals put forward by the FCCQ were incorporated as submitted into the industrial and research and innovation policies, e.g., increased financial support for the manufacturing sector, tax credits for manufacturing innovation and assistance in bringing innovations to market.
Participation in the public consultation on the research and innovation policy.	
Advocacy to ensure the various needs of businesses of all sizes are taken into account.	

Support for the mining industry

KEY ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE FCCQ	INFLUENCE OR RESULTS
Repeated dealings with the government to stress FCCQ members' concerns about Bill 43 regarding the mining industry.	Abandonment of the first bill, which would have been detrimental to the competitiveness of the mining industry and jeopardized investment in the sector.
Presentation by the FCCQ to the parliamentary committee on its position concerning the contents of the bill.	Adoption of Bill 70, which is more closely aligned with the interests of chambers of commerce and the mining industry.
Efforts to engage stakeholders and improve the provisions of the new mining industry bill.	Several changes made to the bill, reflecting the FCCQ's position.

Energy development

KEY ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE FCCQ	INFLUENCE OR RESULTS
Presentation of the FCCQ's position on Québec's new energy strategy to the Commission sur les enjeux énergétiques.	Elements of the FCCQ's position have been incorporated into various government announcements.
Support for hydrocarbon exploration and production.	Government demonstrating more openness to exploring and developing oil resources in Québec.
Support for pipeline projects: presentations made by the FCCQ at the National Assembly parliamentary committee and National Energy Board (NEB) hearings; numerous media appearances.	Favourable report issued by the parliamentary committee on the Enbridge project. Awaiting the NEB report on the Enbridge project, slated for January 2014.
Release of a study on the economic benefits of the western Canadian oil industry.	Increased awareness of the impact of the western Canadian oil industry on Québec.

Forest industry

KEY ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE FCCQ	INFLUENCE OR RESULTS
Participation in the preliminary consultation held by the Ministère des Ressources naturelles on forest management.	Highlights of the Rendez-vous de la forêt québécoise included the announcement of several measures aimed at supporting and transforming the forest industry.
Involvement in the Rendez-vous de la forêt québécoise.	
Media communications in support of the revival and restructuring of the forest industry.	

Education and workforce training

KEY ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE FCCQ	INFLUENCE OR RESULTS
Ongoing contact with the minister and senior officials to push for greater SME access to training programs.	Change in programs offered through the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail (CPMT) to extend eligibility to training offered by private companies.
Efforts by four employers' associations to modify how funding applications are processed by the CPMT. Active involvement in the CPMT's initiatives.	
Concerted effort, in conjunction with other chambers of commerce throughout the country, to urge the federal government to overhaul the Canada Job Grant program which, in its current form, is insufficient to meet the needs of provincial stakeholders and the private sector.	

Infrastructure and transportation

KEY ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE FCCQ	INFLUENCE OR RESULTS
Concrete proposals about the proposed transport agency.	Bill tabled that incorporates several FCCQ proposals.
Proposals on new solutions for financing roads and public transit (presentation to the deputy transport minister's team).	Proposals will be taken into account in the future transportation policy.
Detailed report on air transportation.	Will be presented to the provincial and federal governments.
Pressure to accelerate work on the Champlain Bridge.	Speedier progress being made.
Concrete proposals on how government and municipal contracts are awarded.	Proactive proposals by the FCCQ intended to influence the next set of guidelines issued by the Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor du Québec.

Sustainable development and green economy

KEY ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE FCCQ	INFLUENCE OR RESULTS
Concerted effort against increasing the GHG reduction target from 20% to 25%.	Government still reluctant to commit to this position, despite its electoral platform.
Efforts to document the needs of technology and green building developers.	Economic aspects to be emphasized within the business community and government circles.

In addition to these major initiatives, the FCCQ has been active in the following sectors over the past six months:

Agri-food

- Consideration of needs specific to the food processing industry in Québec's industrial and innovation policies.
- Offer of compensation for cheesemakers in conjunction with the Canada-EU free trade deal.

Entrepreneurship

- Follow-up and coordination with chambers of commerce in the operationalization of the Prêt à entreprendre program.
- Launch of partnership with SAFEC, a new service designed to help businesses and entrepreneurs connect with sources of assistance and funding.
- Advocacy and awareness efforts aimed at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in order to approach the federal government.
- Introduction of initiatives to ease the transfer of business ownership between related parties.

Healthcare

- Arguments defending the added value of private-sector services in the public healthcare system.

Life sciences

- Transition measures to be provided to this industry after patent protection has expired.
- Involvement in the government's summit on the research and innovation policy.

Information technology

- Actions undertaken to fast-track the development of the digital economy.

Workplace health and safety

- Monitoring of new asbestos regulations.
- Ongoing vigilance regarding board involvement and uploading of twelve certified online health and safety courses.

Overregulation

- Fight against surcharges for specific goods (e.g., beverages).
- Strengthening of measures to curtail cigarette smuggling.

Federal government lobbying efforts

- Rallying of the network of chambers of commerce in Québec and throughout Canada to renew labour market agreements (\$120 million for Québec).
- Rallying of the business community against the creation of a federal financial regulatory authority and efforts aimed at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce to influence the federal government.
- Appearance before the budget committee to speak to the business community's concerns about the phasing out of the tax credit for contributions to labour-sponsored funds.
- Participation in the federal finance minister's pre-budget consultations.

Chamber of commerce network

- Ongoing communications with chambers of commerce to continue to drive economic vitality.
- Reaching out to chambers of commerce across Canada to come to the aid of their counterparts in Lac-Mégantic.
- Support for several initiatives spearheaded by local chambers of commerce (Gentilly, Sherbrooke Airport, etc).
- Growing involvement in the network of chambers of commerce in Canada and North America.
- Expanded set of professional development tools for chamber of commerce directors and staff members, with a focus on governance and strategic planning.



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