

2019 Policy Pillars for Growth

Pillar II: Predictable & Reliable Government Services

Atlantic Chamber of Commerce (ACC) Position

ACC supports efforts to improve the efficiency and reliability of interactions between business and government, in particular, regarding assessments, approvals and permits.

Why it is Important

For many years businesses have voiced concerns about the cost of governmental red tape. A lack of coordination between provinces has created numerous trade impediments and added an estimated cost of \$8.5B to our collective economies. Delays and uncertainty regarding government approvals, permits, and access to programs are reducing the operating profitably and ability to coordinate investment.

What can be Done

Establish Maximum Response Times for Government Services

Predictability is a key factor in developing business plans. Governments need to establish and enforce standard service and response times for applications, registrations and major project review.

Comprehensive Tax Review

A dedicated effort to simplify the complex tax system will improve productivity and competitiveness. Economic activity can be stimulated by aligning personal, corporate and property tax codes.

Remove Redundancy

Many businesses are burdened by the need to register and/or certify operations with more than one department or government. The ideal and most cost-effective situation would be for the four provinces to establish one Atlantic regulatory body where ever possible.

Business Impact Assessments

All provinces should require a business impact assessment to accompany proposed regulatory and legislative changes to avoid increases to the compliance burden currently impacting productivity.

Recommendations

Atlantic Chamber of Commerce recommends provincial governments:

- recognize inefficient government processes slow business operations and investment decisions;
- establish reliable and efficient service standards for government programs and approvals, including environmental impact assessments;
- recognize regulatory processes are inordinately onerous on small businesses;
- require any changes to regulations include a publicly-accessible business impact assessment;
- streamline reporting mechanisms by sharing basic identification data between provinces;
- establish electronic regional databases or agencies to create data interchange efficiencies; and
- wherever possible, opt for mutual recognition of provincial training and certifications.