



October 12, 2011

Office of the President and
Chief Executive Officer

Cabinet du président
et chef de la direction

Hon. John Duncan, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
10 Wellington Street
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0H4

Hon. Diane Finley, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development
140 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0J9

Hon. Joe Oliver, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Natural Resources
580 Booth Street, 21st Floor, Room C7-1
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E4

Hon. Christian Paradis, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Industry and
Ministry of State (Agriculture)
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5

Dear Ministers:

On September 19, in partnership with GE Canada, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce released *Making the Business Case for Investing in Canada's Remote Communities*.

As Canada seeks to strengthen its global competitiveness, we undertook to place a business lens on the economic opportunities, challenges, best practices and business investment intentions in remote communities. During the first half of 2011, GE Canada sought the perspectives of businesspeople through roundtables in communities across Canada and an online survey. At the same time, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce consulted with several of its members and other stakeholders.

420 - 360, rue Albert St.
Ottawa, Ontario
K1R 7X7

) 613.238.4000
613.238.7643

Chamber.ca
info@chamber.ca

We found that - if all Canadians are to fully benefit from the potential of our remote communities - the federal government must take the lead in developing a long-term strategy that paves the way for remote communities to reap the rewards of economic development. While this long-term work is underway, the Canadian Chamber proposes more immediate measures the federal government - working alone, with the provinces/territories and/or with business - can take to create the policy environment needed to encourage private sector investment in remote communities.

This policy environment needs to include the following:

- skills and training programs - delivered in partnership with business whenever possible - that are flexible enough to accommodate the economic realities of individual communities and the alternate training models that may be required to deliver effective results;
- effective transition support for those leaving remote communities to pursue studies in urban centres;
- tools to allow Canadian businesses and stakeholders in remote communities to familiarize themselves with each others' business practices, governments, agencies, laws and regulations;
- a reduction in business' regulatory burden by adopting a standardized "one project-one assessment approach" that harmonizes federal and provincial/territorial statutes and regulations;
- looking to the possibilities associated with extending broadband telecommunications to remote regions - and business models for delivering the services associated with them - as a model for engaging the private sector in other types of infrastructure construction and services delivery. (This includes the government acting as a lead user and creator of demand);
- assisting stakeholders to pool their resources to address infrastructure gaps through using online tools, pilot projects and considering commercial applications for public infrastructure projects; and
- addressing the "investment vs. subsidy dilemma" for investing in remote communities. There is the perception that public dollars used to improve infrastructure in remote communities are subsidies, not investments.

I have enclosed copies of this paper in English and French. Should your staff wish to discuss it further, they may contact the paper's author, Susanna Cluff-Clyburne, Director, Parliamentary Affairs, at scluff-clyburne@chamber.ca or 613-238-4000 (ext. 225).

Sincerely,



Perrin Beatty
President and Chief Executive Officer
The Canadian Chamber of Commerce

c.c.: Michael Wernick, Deputy Minister, Aboriginal and Northern
Development Canada
Ian Shugart, Deputy Minister, Human Resources and Skills
Development Canada
Serge Dupont, Deputy Minister, Natural Resources Canada
Richard Dicerni, Deputy Minister, Industry Canada

Enclosures

