

# A guide to Preparing a Resolution

February 2011



*The Voice of Canadian Business™*

# connect!

# 5 Steps to Creating a resolution

## Step 1 Define the issue

What is the problem or opportunity that needs to be addressed and what federal government action is required/desired?

## Step 2 Meet the six criteria

As the *Voice of Canadian Business*<sup>™</sup>, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce represents businesses of all sizes from all sectors and regions of Canada. Guided by our policy resolutions, the Canadian Chamber is a strong advocate for – and works to unite and serve – the best interests of the business community and Canadians as a whole.

All resolutions must meet the following criteria:

1. The issue is of national interest to the business community and not a local or regional issue.
2. The issue is current, timely and requires action.
3. The resolution is complete, detailed and supported by factual information (quality).
4. The resolution deals with a federal issue, and not one under local or provincial/territorial jurisdiction.
5. The issue is important to community and business leaders from across Canada.
6. The resolution does not align one sector, industry or region of Canada against another.

## Step 3 Format your resolution

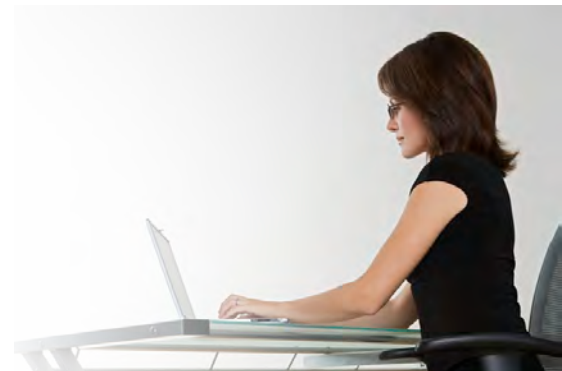
Use the provided template to format your resolution. Your resolution must contain an **issue statement**, a **background** and **recommendations** targeted at the federal government.

## Step 4 Review content

Review the resolution checklist, contained within the following pages, to ensure that your resolution has all the needed elements to ensure an informed debate at the annual meeting.


## Step 5 Submit on time

Send your resolution by email to Claire Van Allen at [cvanallen@chamber.ca](mailto:cvanallen@chamber.ca) by the resolution deadline of **June 1, 2011**.



# Resolution Checklist

What follows is a series of questions which can guide you through the process of defining your resolution. By answering these questions, you should have a quality resolution which will provide an informed debate at the annual meeting and a strong policy position for the Canadian Chamber.



## 1 What is the issue?

- ✓ It is important to carefully define what the problem and/or opportunity is and what the federal government should do about it.
- ✓ What are the key concerns, problems or challenges that this issue/opportunity brings to the business community?
- ✓ Define a possible solution (be as specific as possible).

### Helpful Hints:

The more specific that you can be, the more likely it is that you can provide a workable solution to the federal government. Also, a specific recommendation is more likely to get a specific answer rather than a general one.

EXAMPLE: Instead of: "Taxes are too high and should be lowered," be specific: "The corporate income tax rate is too high and should be lowered by 2%."



## 2 Is this issue a national one? Does it affect businesses in all regions of Canada?

- ✓ The issue must be of national importance and not only local or regional in nature.
- ✓ Does the issue affect all businesses or is it specific to a particular segment of the business community?
- ✓ Background information should be broadly-based. Information from various regions can help to indicate the issue's national relevance. Anything primarily focused on one area must clearly demonstrate why the resolution is so nationally important that an exception should be made.

### Helpful Hints:

Remember that the three territories are part of Canada and that any references to provinces should include the territories as well.

If the resolution was previously passed at provincial/territorial or regional annual meetings, revisions may be required before submitting to the Canadian Chamber to give it a more national focus. Provide national statistics and/or more than one provincial/territorial example, and eliminate recommendations targeted at provincial/territorial/regional governments.

If the issue is specifically targeted, it might be useful to include information as to why the business community at large would want to see the requested action taken.

# 3 Is the issue current and timely?

- ✓ The issue should be timely and one which the federal government should take action on now or within a specified timeframe.
- ✓ The background should include information and statistics that are the most recently available. This includes renewals of resolutions passed at previous annual meetings.
- ✓ If this is a renewal from a previously submitted resolution, is the issue still important? Are there new facts that can help advance it from its previous version?

## Helpful Hints:

Ensure that any references to proposed legislation include the name of the bill and the bill number. This will help clarify the resolution in the future once the bill is passed or defeated, since bill numbers change with each session of Parliament.

# 4 Is this a federal issue?

- ✓ The issue should be of federal jurisdiction, not provincial/territorial or municipal.
- ✓ Each of the recommendations must be specific, clearly actionable and directed at the federal government.

## Helpful Hints:

There may be issues that are national but not federal – examples might be the issue of interprovincial trade barriers or the harmonization of environmental regulations. In these cases, it is very important to explain why an issue should be dealt with by the Canadian Chamber, especially if there is little or no federal involvement in the area. Generally speaking, Canadian Chamber resolutions should not discuss issues or make recommendations that do not involve the federal government.

For areas of shared jurisdiction between the provincial/territorial and federal governments, focus on what the federal government should do, or how the federal government could work with the provinces and territories to accomplish the objective. In these cases, it must be clear that there is a role for the federal government to play.

EXAMPLE: “That the federal government work cooperatively with the provinces and territories to establish a consistent air quality standard across Canada.”

# 5

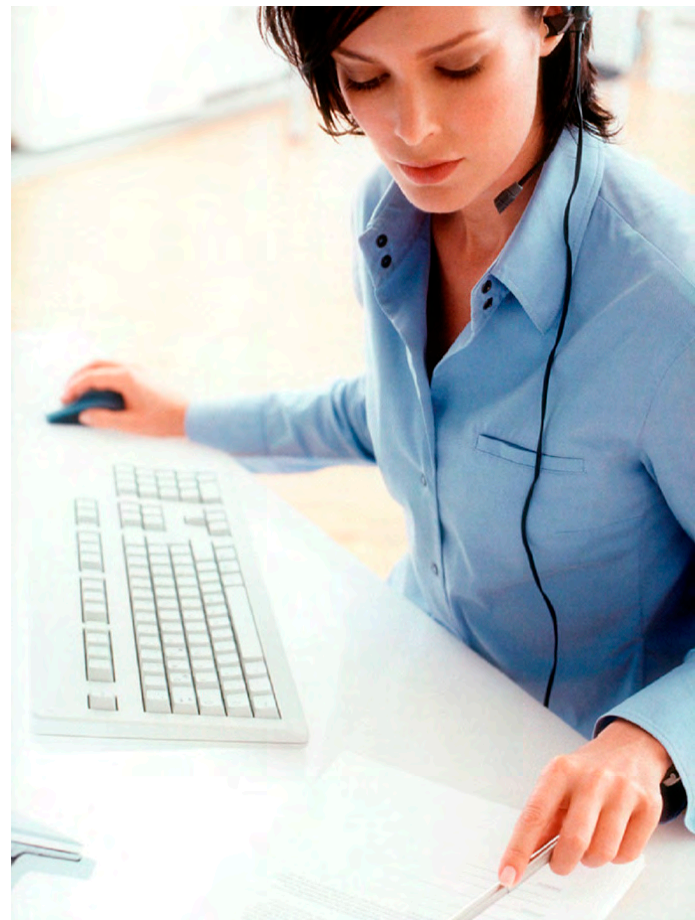
## Is the resolution factual, detailed and complete?

- ✓ Consider whether someone who is not an expert on this issue could make a decision on the recommendations based on the information included in the background.
- ✓ The background should be concise but still provide enough information to build the case for the recommendations and explain what benefits will accrue from their implementation.

### Helpful Hints:

While there is no firm limit on the size of resolutions, if your resolution is longer than a page, you may be including too much information.

**REMEMBER:** As a general rule, anything longer than 1-1½ pages will not get read by ministers or senior officials.



# 6 Does this resolution conflict with or duplicate existing Canadian Chamber policy?



- ✓ Have you checked to ensure your issue is not the same, or substantially the same, as an existing resolution?
- ✓ If you see that approval of your resolution would be contrary to existing Canadian Chamber policy, include a note at the bottom as to which policy (and specific recommendations, if applicable) it would supercede.

It would be useful to include, either in the background or in the note at the bottom, an explanation as to why this change in policy direction should be made.

## Helpful Hints:

Remember that the resolution must not align one sector, industry or region of Canada against another.

# 7 How much will implementing this resolution cost?

- ✓ If what is being recommended will increase government expenditures (such as new spending programs) or decrease government revenues (tax cuts), does the resolution include an estimate of how much implementation will cost? If there is an increase in expenditures, where should the money come from (for example, from increased taxes or redirected from other programs)?
- ✓ Is the resolution asking for a business subsidy? If so, is it fair to all sectors and regions?

## Helpful Hints:

Including information about the cost of the recommendations will increase the credibility of the resolution.



## 8 Does the resolution have a sponsor?

- ✓ Each resolution must have a sponsor when it is submitted. Each local chamber of commerce/board of trade and each Canadian Chamber expert committee may sponsor up to two resolutions.
- ✓ A chamber/board/committee may co-sponsor as many resolutions as it wishes.
- ✓ If the resolution is a renewal or update to an existing resolution, please contact the submitter of the original resolution to find out whether they plan on resubmitting it themselves. Canadian Chamber staff can help to determine the original submitter if necessary.

### Helpful Hints:

Including co-sponsors from several different regions can help demonstrate the national importance of an issue.

# 9

## Is your resolution formatted correctly?

- ✓ A proposed resolution begins with an **issue statement**. The first paragraph (no more than 2-3 sentences) should state concisely the issue that is being covered by the resolution.
- ✓ Next is the **background**, the main body of the resolution. It should include case-building facts and data demonstrating why this issue is relevant and why it matters to the national business community.
- ✓ There should be an explanation of the impact this issue/opportunity is having, or would have, on the bottom line of business and its ability to compete, and/or how it is affecting, or could affect, Canadian economic growth and development. If you include specific statistics, note the source.
- ✓ Reference to further background data from other reputable sources can be a helpful way of providing access to related information without actually including it in the resolution.
- ✓ The final part of the resolution is the **recommendation**. The recommendation begins with: "That the federal government..." and is followed by specific actions that the federal government should take; i.e., "That the federal government, reduce the GST rate to 2%."
- ✓ The resolutions are to be submitted in the template provided by the Canadian Chamber.

### Helpful Hints:

If you have more than 2-4 recommendations, consider whether you are diluting the effect of the resolution by focusing on too many objectives.

When writing recommendations, ask yourself, "What do I want the federal government to do about this issue?"

# 10 Is all relevant contact information

- ✓ It is important that we have your chamber contact information (relevant name, fax, e-mail, phone) for the resolution when it is submitted.
- ✓ Following the submission of a resolution, chambers will be invited to participate in conference calls with the national expert policy committees to discuss their resolutions.

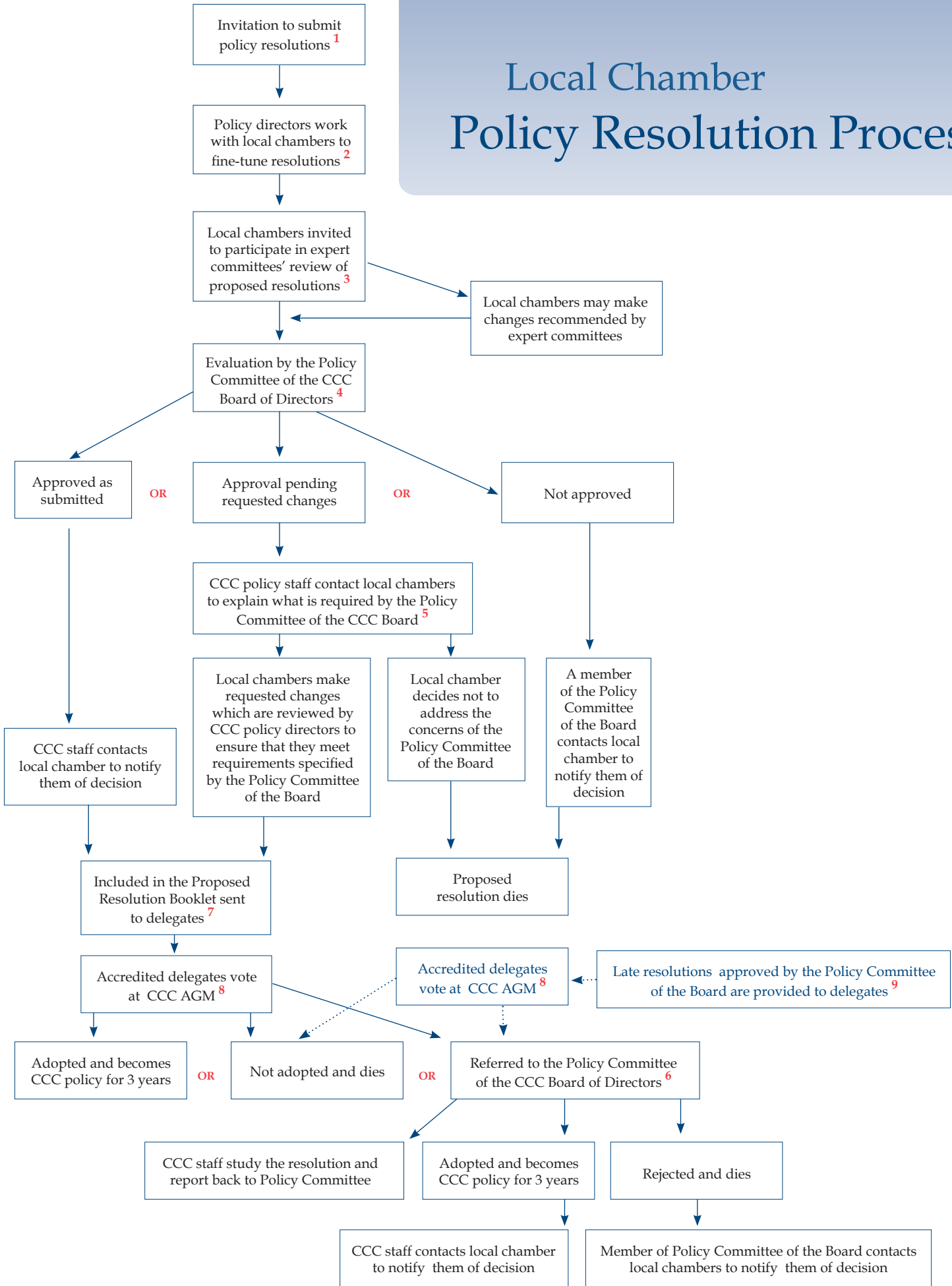
## Helpful Hints:

A phone call to the appropriate policy director at the Canadian Chamber can ensure that you are in a better position to determine which resolution(s) to submit. Our policy directors can provide useful information, including:

- Suggestions as to timely topics that might make good resolutions.
- How to position a resolution if other chambers are working on similar resolutions.
- Where you might be able to find supporting facts/statistics.
- Suggestions as to where you might be able to find a co-sponsor for your resolution.
- Some sense as to how your resolution might be received by the government – some issues have existing traction and others can be dead on arrival.



# Local Chamber Policy Resolution Process



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## Footnotes

Numbers correspond to numbers in policy resolution process chart (left).

1. The invitation includes:
  - the guidelines for preparing a resolution including the deadline for submission to the Canadian Chamber, as well as other key dates and requirements;
  - the Canadian Chamber's priority policy areas as set by the Board of Directors; and
  - the policy resolution template.

All these documents are available at Chamber.ca.

2. Policy directors may recommend revisions based on their expertise on the issue and on the resolution process. Some similar resolutions are merged and others withdrawn by sponsoring chambers.

3. Expert committees are primarily composed of Canadian Chamber corporate members who have subject matter expertise. Chamber staff who have expertise in the relevant area may also participate. They:

- make recommendations for changes and express support or non-support (with explanations) for policy resolutions, but
- do not have the power to accept or reject resolutions.

The list of expert committees, mandates and corporate members represented is available at Chamber.ca.

4. The Policy Committee of the Canadian Chamber's Board of Directors is composed of directors selected by the Board. Its responsibilities include:

- setting annual policy priorities for the Canadian Chamber, and
- evaluating proposed policy resolutions, including late resolutions, submitted by local chambers and determining if a resolution will go forward to the AGM for debate/vote.

The Board's Policy Committee evaluates resolutions based on the following criteria:

- a. The issue is of national interest to the business community and not a local or region issue.
- b. The issue is current, timely and requires action.

- c. The resolution is complete, detailed and supported by factual information (quality).
- d. The resolution deals with a federal issue, and not one within local or provincial/territorial jurisdiction.
- e. The issue is important to community and business leaders from across Canada.
- f. The resolution does not align one sector, industry or region of Canada against another.

The Board's Policy Committee may:

- **accept** a resolution for circulation in the "Proposed Resolutions" booklet, or
- **reject** the resolution because it does not meet the aforementioned criteria.

The names of the Board members sitting on this committee are available at Chamber.ca.

5. Canadian Chamber policy directors contact local chambers to give them the opportunity to revise their resolution as required by the Board's Policy Committee. If they make the requested revisions within a specified deadline, their resolution(s) will be included in the "Proposed Resolutions" booklet.

6. The Board's Policy Committee may:

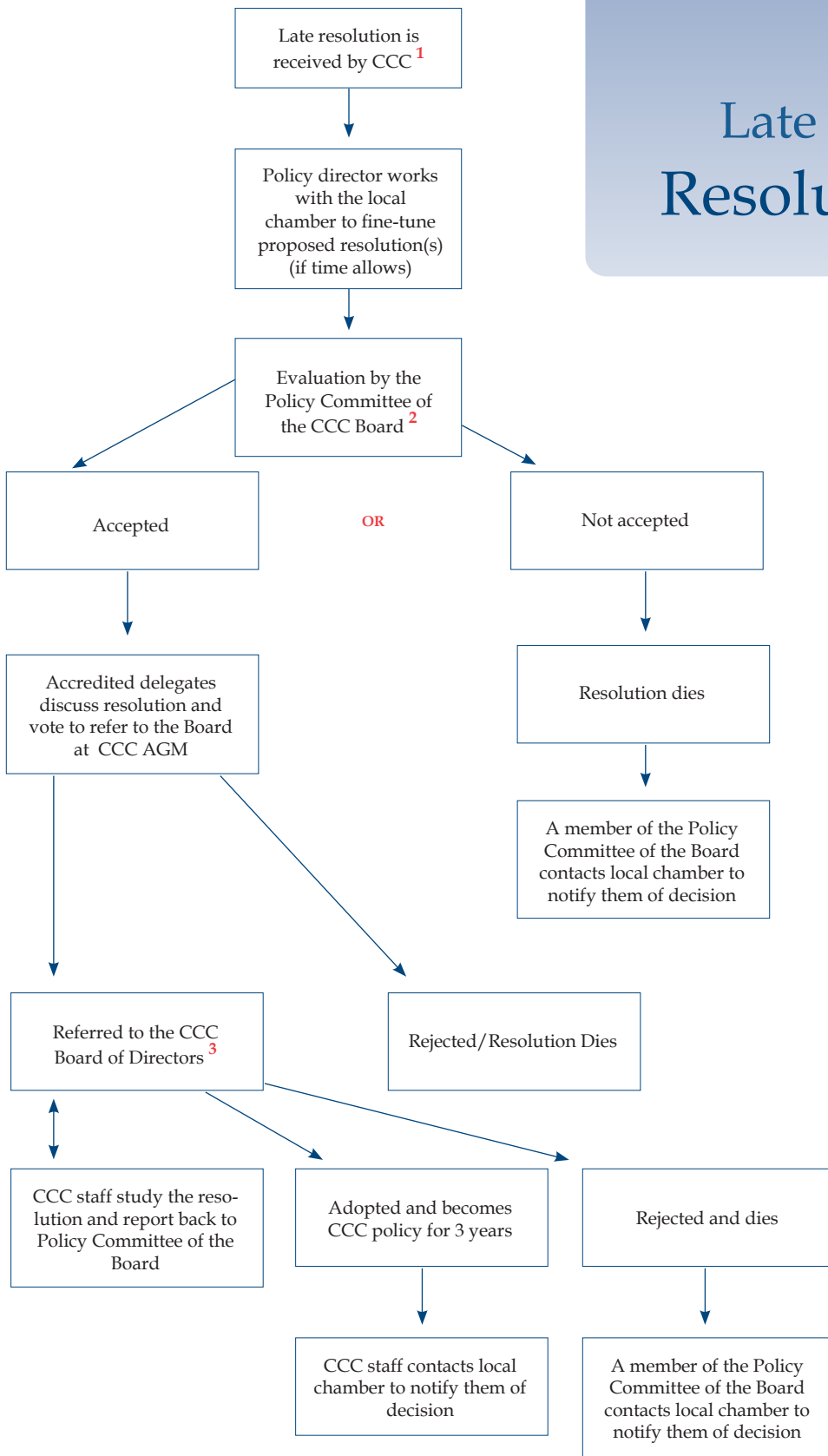
- call for staff to **study** the resolution and report back;
- **adopt** the resolution; or
- **reject** the resolution.

7. The "Proposed Resolutions" booklet is sent to the local chambers at least one month prior to the AGM.

8. Two-thirds of delegates must vote to adopt/adopt-as-amended a resolution or for late resolutions, refer it to the Board's Policy Committee.

9. Any resolution received by the Canadian Chamber after the deadline specified in the invitation will be considered a late resolution.

# Late Policy Resolution Process



- \* Late resolutions are those received after the deadline specified in the initial invitation and 10 business days before the AGM.
- \* If time allows, a CCC policy director will provide input on how the resolution may be improved and/or amended to meet the Policy Committee's guidelines.
- \* Late resolutions are not debated on the floor of the AGM by delegates. Delegates vote on whether to refer the resolution to the Policy Committee of the Board or to reject it.

# Late Resolutions Guidelines

The late resolution process has been designed as an exception to the regular resolution process. It allows for the introduction of resolutions that cover significant, national and timely issues that have arisen since the yearly deadlines for the submission of resolutions as outlined by the CCC.

The Policy Committee of the board will review all late resolutions to ensure they:

- have been submitted no later than 10 business days prior to the CCC AGM (chambers are encouraged to submit as early as possible);
- meet the standard criteria for regular resolutions;
- meet the additional criteria of:
  - a) addressing an issue that requires immediate action (i.e. can't wait until next year);
  - b) accounting of extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances that have arisen since the deadline date for the submission of regular resolutions.

## Late Policy Resolution Process Footnotes

**Numbers correspond to numbers in policy resolution process chart (left).**

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- e. The issue is important to community and business leaders from across Canada.

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- d. The resolution deals with a federal issue, and not one in the local or provincial/territorial jurisdiction.

3. The Board's Policy Committee may:

- Call for staff to **study** the resolution and report back;
- **adopt** the resolution; or
- **reject** the resolution.



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