

Legislative Watch

Volume 8, Issue 14

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Legislative Watch Available in Alternative Formats

Chamber and board managers wishing to forward the Legislative Watch to their members or post it on their website, please be advised that various formats of the newsletter are still available in the 'members' section of the OCC website.

OCC Offices and Legislature Closed for Easter Long Weekend

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce Offices will be closed for Good Friday and Easter Monday and will be reopening on Tuesday, April 13. The Ontario Legislature will also break for a four-day weekend even though Easter Monday is not a statutory holiday. The House will resume on Tuesday and will remain open until the May 24 long-weekend, when it will close for Constituency Week.

AGM Updates...

The submitted policy resolutions book was updated as of April 5, 2004. Three new resolutions were added: *Insurance Premiums, Creating Local Public Accountability in the Police Services Act*, and *Minimum Disclosure Requirements and Mandatory Terms in Contracts for the Supply of Electricity*; and *Electricity in Ontario* has been revised. Another updated version will be posted next week.

The agenda is still being finalized but a more updated draft agenda has been posted today. The keynote speakers for the Saturday and Sunday sessions have been added. **Derek Holt**, Assistant Chief Economist at RBC Financial Group and the most recent addition to the OCC family as the new chair of the Finance & Taxation Committee, will provide delegates with a presentation on the Ontario Economy. We are pleased to host The Honourable **Dwight Duncan**, MPP and Minister of Energy as the keynote speaker for the Business in Action Luncheon. The Minister's address is a timely one as the Ministry of Energy is expected to deliver its announcement for Ontario's energy strategy. On Sunday, **Gerald Protti**, Canadian Chamber of Commerce Chair, will provide an update on Federal Policies Affecting Ontario.

Mr. Protti's presentation will be followed by a Canada-U.S. Relations Panel discussion, featuring **Bernard Etzinger**, official spokesperson for the Canadian Embassy in Washington, and **James Williams**, Director of Public Affairs for the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa.

If you have not already registered for the 92nd Annual General Meeting & Convention please do so today!

If you have any questions please contact Colleen MacIntyre by email at colleenmacintyre@occ.on.ca or by telephone at (416) 482-5222, extension 222.

All updated materials for the 2004 AGM can be found at the following link:
<http://www.occ.on.ca/members/2agm.asp>.

Borders Survey Extended

The OCC survey on border delays has been extended to the end of the day on Wednesday, April 14, 2004. Members are urged to complete this survey in addition to forwarding it to their own members. This is an important survey seeking to quantify the delays of crossing the borders to and from Ontario and the United States. Trade is a vital component of Ontario's economy which must be fostered, not hindered. Please take a few moments to ensure that your feedback and input is captured on this important topic. The survey can be found at the following link: http://www.occ.on.ca/cgi-bin/2_2004CostofBorderDelays/index.asp. If you have any technical questions please contact Elizabeth Lopez at webmaster@occ.on.ca.

Does Your Company Need To Register With Stewardship Ontario?

Deadline for submitting a report and payment of fees is April 20, 2004.

Ontario's new *Waste Diversion Act* applies to "stewards" (companies that introduce packaging and printed paper into the Ontario consumer marketplace) with 2002 gross revenue from sales totaling over \$2 million, to share in the funding of 50% of Ontario's municipal blue box/bag recycling programs.

"Stewards" include 'brand owners', 'first importers' and 'franchisers' that produce residential 'blue box waste' in the form of consumer packaging and paper. This includes anything that can be recycled under the current 'blue box program' including glass, metal, plastic, paper, textiles.

"Packaging" means all products made of paper, glass, metal, plastics, textiles or any combination thereof to be used for the containment, protection, handling, delivery and presentation of goods, from raw materials to processed goods, from the producer to the user or the home consumer. Packaging that does not go to the end consumer or user is either deductible or exempt. Please see www.stewardshipontario.ca/pdf/Guidebook2_Stewardship_Ontario.pdf for further details.

Fees range from 0.028 cents per kilogram for newspaper to 6.692 cents per kilogram for all plastic packaging.

Stewards under the \$2 million gross revenue from sales are not required to register with Stewardship Ontario. Stewards over the \$2 million *de minimis* but who produced less than 15 tones of Blue Box packaging and paper materials in 2002 still must register but are exempt from payment in the first year of the program.

Stewards are required to pre-register at www.stewardshipdatasystem.ca/steward_reg.asp after which they are to establish a contact person with Stewardship Ontario and register fully.

Stewards are required to report data on all packaging and paper materials using their own records. If such records are unavailable, Stewardship Ontario has provided an on-line sectoral calculator for the first year only.

The deadline for submitting a report and paying all fees is **April 20, 2004**. Stewardship Ontario will charge interest and penalties to stewards who do not register and/or pay their fees within 90 days of notification.

Please visit the Stewardship Ontario website for more information and to view their four helpful guides:

▶ [Guidebook #1: The Waste Diversion Act - Are You Obligated?](http://www.stewardshipontario.ca/pdf/Guidebook1_Stewardship_Ontario.pdf)
www.stewardshipontario.ca/pdf/Guidebook1_Stewardship_Ontario.pdf

▶ [Guidebook #2: Collecting & Reporting Your Blue Box Waste Materials Data](http://www.stewardshipontario.ca/pdf/Guidebook2_Stewardship_Ontario.pdf)
www.stewardshipontario.ca/pdf/Guidebook2_Stewardship_Ontario.pdf

▶ [Guidebook #3: Terms of Membership with Stewardship Ontario](http://www.stewardshipontario.ca/pdf/Guidebook3_Stewardship_Ontario.pdf)
www.stewardshipontario.ca/pdf/Guidebook3_Stewardship_Ontario.pdf

▶ [Guidebook #4: How to Register, Report & Manage Your Waste Materials Data](http://www.stewardshipontario.ca/pdf/Guidebook4_Stewardship_Ontario.pdf)
www.stewardshipontario.ca/pdf/Guidebook4_Stewardship_Ontario.pdf

Economic Development in Northern Ontario

On April 3, 2004, the OCC sent a letter to Mr. Bill Mauro, MPP, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, regarding tax-incentive zones and economic development in Northern Ontario.

For a copy of the complete submission please visit our website at www.occ.on.ca.

OCC Participates in Infrastructure Renewal Discussion

On March 31, 2004, the OCC delivered its submission on Infrastructure Financing and Procurement to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal as part of its IFP Stakeholder Outreach.

The submission makes recommendations on specific transportation and infrastructure issues including establishing a transportation authority, levying a gas tax, the role of the private sector, user fees, and water infrastructure. The Transportation Authority Study and the Borders Task Force Final Report were also included in the submission.

For a copy of the complete submission please visit our website at www.occ.on.ca.

Final Report on August '03 Blackout Released

On April 5, 2004, Minister of Natural Resources Canada, the Honourable R. John Efford, and The U.S. Secretary of Energy, Spencer Abraham, released the final report of the Canada-U.S. Power System Outage Task Force on the 2003 August blackout. The report can be found at http://www.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/media/docs/reports_e.htm. The task force was established on August 15, the following day of the blackout, by Canada's then Prime Minister John Chretien and the President of the United States, George W. Bush, to identify the causes of the blackout that affected North America and to make recommendations toward reducing the likelihood of future outages.

The report discusses the causes of the power outage and why the blackout was not contained. It outlines a number of recommendations, both policy and technical, to prevent and/or reduce the probability of any future power outages.

Recommendations include:

- Implementation of mandatory and enforceable electricity reliability standards in both the United States and Canada, with penalties for noncompliance, backed by appropriate government oversight;
- Strengthening the institutional framework of the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC) and its initiatives on compliance;
- Developing a funding mechanism approved by regulators for NERC and the regional reliability councils, in order to ensure their independence from the parties they oversee;
- Addressing deficiencies identified in FirstEnergy and some reliability organizations in the United States, by June 30, 2004;
- Strengthening the technical recommendations made by NERC on February 10, 2004;
- Improving near-term and long-term training and certification requirements for operators, reliability coordinators and operator support staff; and
- Increasing the physical and cyber security of the network.

The report is available at www.NRCan.gc.ca or www.energy.gov.

The following three media backgrounders are also available:

[Input into the Recommendations of the Canada-U.S. Power System Outage Task Force](#)

[Canada-U.S. Power System Outage Task Force Recommendations](#)

[Timeline Canada-U.S. Power System Outage Task Force](#)

Energy Rebate Extended

The government is planning to introduce legislation which will further extend the Retail Sales Tax (RST) rebate available on purchases of new energy-efficient electrical household appliances to July 31, 2004.

This rebate is available on Energy Star qualified refrigerators, dishwashers and clothes washers sold on or after November 26, 2002 and on or before July 31, 2004; and freezers sold on or after January 1, 2003 and on or before July 31, 2004.

The rebate applies to first time sale, as well as to the rental or lease for at least one year of a new qualifying appliance.

To claim a rebate you must complete an “Application for Rebate of Retail Sales Tax on Energy-Efficient Electrical Household Appliances” which can be found at www.trd.fin.gov.on.ca.

[PDF Version of Rebate on New Energy-Efficient Electrical Household Appliances Extended to July 31, 2004](#) 

[PDF Version of Application for Rebate of Retail Sales Tax on Energy-Efficient Electrical Household Appliances](#) 

Canadian Chamber Gearing Up For Its AGM

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce's policy development process is underway. The CCC is currently accepting policy submissions for its 75th Annual General Meeting to be held from September 18 – 20 in Calgary, Alberta.

The deadline for submitting policy resolutions is June 3, 2004. Once the resolutions have been posted the OCC will once again kick off its "Team Ontario" policy review process. Team Ontario coordinates responses and provides recommendations to each of the proposed resolutions on an Ontario-wide basis. The Team is made up of various chamber / board executives from across the province. The OCC's policy resolutions review process will consist of a thorough review of all of the proposed resolutions so that a united consensus is demonstrated at the federal level. Team Ontario is expected to begin in early July, 2004. Watch for more information in the coming months.

Upcoming Events

Listed below are some upcoming events that may be of interest to chambers and boards:

- Borders and Trade Development Committee, April 13, 2004
- Energy Task Force Meeting, April 15, 2004
- Empire Club of Canada presents The Honourable Dwight Duncan, MPP, April 15, 2004
- Queen's Park Liaison Forum, April 16, 2004
- Empire Club of Canada and The Canadian Club of Toronto present The Right Honourable Paul Martin, MP, April 16, 2004
- Borders and Trade Development Committee, April 21, 2004
- Ontario Business Advisory Council with Premier Dalton McGuinty, April 28
- Annual General Meeting & Convention, April 30 – May 2, 2004