The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne

Minister of Finance and National Revenue

Office of the Minister of Finance

90 Elgin St, Ottawa Ontario, K1A 0G5

RE: Edmonton Chamber of Commerce Federal Budget Submission

I am writing to submit for your consideration the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce's recommendations for Canada's upcoming federal budget. The Edmonton Chamber's vision is for Edmonton to be recognized as Canada's North Star City. For generations, Edmonton has been known as the Gateway to the North. As global attention turns toward northern development, Arctic sovereignty, critical minerals, energy security, and new transportation corridors, Edmonton is uniquely positioned at the centre of these opportunities. With extensive rail, road, and air connections, Edmonton serves as the primary hub linking Canada's major population centres to the North and the Arctic. Edmonton is central to the future of this country's growth through these adverse times. Overcoming these obstacles will require federal policies that strengthen connections between Canadian regions, facilitate trade within our borders, expand access to new international markets, and support the infrastructure necessary to move Canadian goods, services, and resources efficiently across the country and around the world.

We are encouraged by the federal government's renewed focus on economic resilience, trade diversification, and nation-building. We commend the efforts underway to strengthen east-west trade corridors, reduce interprovincial barriers, and expand Canada's access to global markets through new trade and economic partnerships. We commend how the Prime Minister has encouraged the global community to "take their signs down" and realize that we have a radically changing global trade economy, and new partnerships must be made.

This is why we strongly advocate for the infrastructure necessary to connect Edmonton's resources, energy, manufactured products, and agricultural exports to growing international markets, including the Asia-Pacific region. The challenge now is implementation. To fully realize the benefits of these commitments, the federal government must pair its vision with concrete measures, regulatory certainty, clear timelines, and strategic investments that enable businesses and communities to capitalize on emerging opportunities.

For over 137 years, the Edmonton Chamber has championed growth, innovation, and profitability in Edmonton's business community. Representing nearly 2,000 businesses of all sizes that collectively employ more than 200,000 Canadians, we serve as the voice of business in Alberta's capital region and advocate for policies that strengthen Canada's competitiveness, productivity, and long-term prosperity.

Canada faces a defining economic moment. Global competition for investment is intensifying, trade relationships are evolving, and productivity growth continues to lag behind many peer jurisdictions. At the same time, Canada has a significant opportunity to strengthen its internal economy through the continued reduction of interprovincial barriers, strategic infrastructure investments, workforce development, and policies that encourage business growth and innovation.

Our budget proposal identifies three priority areas designed to establish a more productive, competitive, and prosperous business environment in Canada.

Informed by consultation with our members and the broader business community, we urge the Government of Canada to:

1. Strengthen the business conditions in our One Canadian Economy;
2. Improve Canada's workforce and productivity; and
3. Enhance Canada's competitiveness.

The Edmonton Chamber is confident that investments in these priorities will strengthen Canada's economy, improve business confidence, and ensure communities across the country benefit from sustainable growth and prosperity. More importantly, these recommendations are about positioning Canada to succeed in an increasingly competitive global economy. By strengthening internal trade, expanding market access, increasing productivity, supporting investment, and diversifying our economic partnerships, Canada can build a more agile, resilient, and future-ready economy. Success will not come from waiting for previous economic conditions to return. It will come from taking deliberate action to ensure Canadian businesses can compete, innovate, and grow in a world where economic opportunities and risks are evolving rapidly.

Doug Griffiths
President and Chief Executive Officer
Edmonton Chamber of Commerce

CC:

Hon. Steven MacKinnon, Minister of Transport

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Hon. Evan Solomon, Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Public Safety

Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Jobs and Families

Hon. Tim Hodgson, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

Hon. Julie Dabrusin, Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature

Hon. Eleanor Olszewski, Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience and Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, Internal Trade, and One Canadian Economy

Matt Jeneroux, M.P., Member of Parliament for Edmonton Riverbend

Economic Context

Canada's economy continues to face significant competitiveness challenges. Labour productivity growth remains weak relative to many peer jurisdictions, business investment has lagged, and employers continue to report difficulties finding workers with the skills required to support growth. These challenges are compounded by growing global competition for capital, talent, and investment.

At the same time, Canada has a significant opportunity to strengthen economic growth through improved domestic trade and transportation networks. Efforts to build "One Canadian Economy" through the reduction of internal trade barriers, enhanced labour mobility, and investments in nationally significant infrastructure have the potential to unlock substantial economic benefits for businesses and workers across the country.

The Edmonton region is well positioned to contribute to these objectives; serving as a gateway to the north both historically and today. As a major trade, logistics, energy, manufacturing, and innovation hub, Edmonton connects western and northern Canada through critical transportation networks and supply chains. Supporting Edmonton's economic growth supports Canada's economic growth.

Budget 2027 presents an opportunity to build a stronger and more competitive Canadian economy by reducing barriers to growth, improving productivity, attracting investment, and strengthening the infrastructure that connects Canadians to each other and to international markets.

Budget Priorities

The Government of Canada's commitment to strengthening economic growth, productivity, and national competitiveness presents an opportunity to advance reforms that improve Canada's business environment and economic resilience.

1. Strengthen the Business Conditions in our One Canadian Economy

Canada's long-term prosperity depends on the free movement of goods, services, workers, and investment across the country. As global trade uncertainty increases, strengthening Canada's internal economy represents one of the most significant opportunities to improve productivity and competitiveness.

- **Accelerate the development of One Canadian Economy by removing barriers between provinces and territories, advancing mutual credential recognition, supporting labour mobility, and reducing regulatory duplication through greater regulatory cooperation and modernization**

We thank the federal government for removing all 53 federal exceptions from the Canadian Free Trade Agreement. Despite this progress over the last year, internal trade barriers continue to increase costs, constrain labour mobility, and limit the ability of Canadian businesses to scale nationally. This is a critical juncture at a time where trade with the United States is subject to change at a moment's notice, threatening domestic supply chains. The Government of Canada should continue advancing *One Canadian Economy* by incentivizing mutual credential recognition between provinces and territories, accelerating the removal of remaining internal trade barriers, and implementing regulatory modernization initiatives that simplify reporting requirements and reduce administrative burden on businesses.

Priority should be given to labour mobility, credential recognition, and a "tell us once" reporting framework based on a single business number reporting system that allows businesses to provide information once to government rather than repeatedly across departments and agencies such as the Canada Revenue Agency, Statistics Canada, Corporations Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada, and the Canada

Border Services Agency. These reforms would improve productivity, strengthen economic resilience, and help Canadian businesses compete more effectively at home and abroad.

- **Accelerate Highway 28 as strategic defence-enabling infrastructure**

Highway 28 has experienced repeated serious and fatal collisions along the Edmonton

Cold Lake corridor. Recent incidents include fatal collisions near Cold Lake, Redwater and Gibbons in 2026, as well as fatalities near Smoky Lake in 2024. These tragedies underscore the consequences of relying on a largely two-lane rural highway for residents, workers, commercial traffic, and increasingly significant volumes of defence-related traffic.

Improving Highway 28 is first and foremost about getting people to their destination safely. With substantial defence-related construction and economic activity already underway, improvements should occur before additional traffic places even greater pressure on the corridor. As Canada invests billions of dollars in modernization projects at 4 Wing Cold Lake and introduces the F-35 fighter fleet, Alberta's Highway 28 will play an increasingly critical role in supporting military readiness, defence construction, workforce mobility, and supply chain movement. Improvements to the corridor should be advanced before defence-related traffic and construction activity reach peak levels.

The Edmonton Chamber recommends that the Government of Canada create a dual-use defence-transportation funding stream or eligibility carve-out for provincial highways such as Highway 28 that primarily serve a federal defence installation. Highway 28/4 Wing Cold Lake can be named as a pilot case for this stream. The Edmonton Chamber recommends the federal government partner with the Government of Alberta to accelerate priority safety, capacity, and reliability improvements along the Edmonton-Cold Lake corridor.

- **Invest in nationally significant trade and transportation corridors**

Canada's ability to compete globally depends on efficient transportation networks connecting businesses to customers and markets. The federal government should prioritize and continue accelerating investment through the $5 billion Trade Diversification Corridors Fund in nationally significant trade corridors, transportation

#600 World Trade Centre - 9990 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T5J 1P7
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infrastructure. We would ask that inland ports such as Port Alberta and the Port of Churchill that support Northern infrastructure but are not in the eligible geography of the Arctic Infrastructure Fund be prioritized as they improve supply chain resilience, strengthen east-west trade, and reduce Canada's dependence on any single export market.

2. Improve Canada's Workforce and Productivity

Canada's productivity challenges continue to constrain economic growth, business competitiveness, and long-term prosperity. Addressing labour shortages, attracting entrepreneurs, supporting technology adoption, and creating conditions for business investment are critical to reversing these trends.

- **Modernize Canada's entrepreneur immigration pathway**

Last year, the *Start-up Visa* program was reporting 10 year wait times, and closed for new applications at the start of 2026. While the Government of Canada has alluded to a program refresh, many businesses are left with uncertainty that threatens their ability to continue their enterprise in Canada.

These international entrepreneurs and business founders create jobs, attract investment, and drive innovation. The Government of Canada should replace or substantially reform the Start-up Visa Program with a modernized entrepreneur immigration pathway with a clear admissions target that provides certainty for investors and founders while supporting long-term business growth and expansion in Canada. To provide certainty to founders who are already in Canada and are experiencing uncertainty, the federal government should publish the pilot details on a fixed timeline and create an explicit transition plan for those are in the backlog.

Canada must remain competitive in attracting entrepreneurs and high-growth businesses. Without a reliable pathway for business founders, Canada risks losing investment, talent, and economic opportunity to competing jurisdictions.

- **Accelerate foreign credential recognition in priority occupations**

In Alberta, many sectors key to the economy, such as construction and engineering, advanced manufacturing, and life sciences continue to face persistent labour shortages despite the presence of internationally trained workers already living somewhere in Canada. The Government of Canada should work with provinces, regulators, employers, and post-secondary institutions to expand the Foreign Credential Recognition Program. The program is currently limited to health and construction, and should be expanded to include skilled trades, engineering, manufacturing, and technology. These occupations are experiencing critical workforce shortages, and expedited credential recognition pathways would increase workforce participation, reduce labour shortages, and improve Canada's productivity. As the North Star City, we would also ask that the federal government fast track credential recognition for individuals looking to settle in Northern or rural communities.

- **Develop a National AI Adoption Strategy for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses**

Canada is home to world-leading artificial intelligence research, yet adoption rates among businesses continue to lag competing jurisdictions. The Government of Canada's National AI Strategy "*AI for All"* pillar three emphasizes "accelerated adoption among small and medium-sized businesses". The Government of Canada should move forward on their goal of increasing business adoption from the current 12% to 60% by 2034, by committing a dedicated funding envelope and delivery mechanism for SMEs. Emphasis should be placed on sectors such as construction, manufacturing, logistics, engineering, and professional services where technology adoption can produce significant productivity gains.

- **Support the City of Edmonton's Request to Enhance Public Safety and Violence Prevention**

To effectively address Edmonton's unique urban social and public safety challenges, the federal government should strengthen its partnership with municipalities by supporting locally led crime prevention, community safety, and community reintegration initiatives. In their own federal submission, Edmonton's City Council has identified several priority investments that align with federal objectives, including ongoing bail reform efforts and the Federal Framework to Reduce Recidivism. The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Canada to support these priorities.

As part of the submission from the City of Edmonton, the federal government should provide additional funding to support successful reintegration of individuals released from correctional facilities. Edmonton faces unique pressures related to offender reintegration, with Edmonton having twice the prison population of Calgary. Additional funding should be provided to ensure individuals being released from correctional facilities have robust integration plans, including culturally appropriate supports for Indigenous peoples.

- **Support Edmonton City Council's proposed $13.5 million Community Safety Strategy.**

While the City of Edmonton greatly appreciates the $650,000 Crime Prevention and Action Fund grant received earlier this year, the federal government should provide funding for the full $13.5 million community safety strategy outlined in the City's December 2025 grant proposal. This investment would enable the transition from planning to implementation, delivering targeted downtown safety infrastructure, direct intervention and integration supports for frequent justice system users, and essential equipment and infrastructure for Edmonton's stabilization centre.

3. Enhance Canada's Competitiveness

Strategic infrastructure and investment policies are essential to attracting private capital, strengthening supply chains, supporting economic growth, and ensuring Canada remains competitive in a rapidly changing global economy.

- **Review labour relations frameworks affecting nationally significant transportation infrastructure**

Recent disruptions affecting Canada's air, rail, marine, and port networks have demonstrated the importance of reliable transportation infrastructure to Canada's economy.

The Government of Canada should implement the outstanding recommendations of the government's own 2024/25 Industrial Inquiry Commission on West Coast Ports, particularly geographic certification and the new specialized mediation mechanism. Canada should seek opportunities to adopt best practices from internationally recognized labour relations models that have successfully reduced labour disruptions while fully respecting collective bargaining rights and the right of workers to strike.

- **Extend or make permanent the Productivity Super Deduction tax credit**

The Productivity Super Deduction provides an important incentive for businesses to invest in productivity-enhancing assets, technology, machinery, and other capital investments that support economic growth and global competitiveness. However, key elements of the measure are currently scheduled to expire at the end of 2026.

The Productivity Super Deduction has improved the investment environment by reducing the after-tax cost of capital investments, accelerating cost recovery, improving business cash flow, and strengthening Canada's competitiveness for private investment. Extending the measure beyond 2026 would provide businesses with the certainty needed to undertake long-term investments in technology, equipment, infrastructure, and productivity-enhancing assets.

The federal government should extend the Productivity Super Deduction beyond its current sunset date, or make it permanent. The United States has done this with incentives under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, 2025; allowing businesses to permanently expense certain R&D and capital expenditures. This includes 100% bonus depreciation for certain capital expenses, including the same "productivity enhancing assets” targeted by the temporary policies in Canada.

At a time when Canadian businesses are investing in artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, digital infrastructure, and productivity-enhancing technologies, maintaining these incentives will help strengthen Canada's competitiveness, encourage capital investment, and drive productivity growth across the economy.

- **Invest in national supply chain infrastructure and trade-enabling assets**

Recent disruptions to transportation networks and global trade flows have demonstrated the importance of resilient supply chains. The Government of Canada should continue investing in nationally significant trade corridors, transportation infrastructure, inland logistics hubs, ports, airports, rail corridors, and multimodal freight networks that improve the efficient movement of goods across Canada and into international markets.

Strategic supply chain investments are necessary to strengthen economic resilience, support export diversification, and improve Canada's competitiveness as a trading nation.

The Government of Canada must close the post-port supply chain data gap. Once goods clear customs at a Canadian port, Canada currently has no mechanism to track their onward movement by rail or truck, the proposed regulatory authority to collect data from port terminal operators stops at the terminal gate, and most exports to the United States require no export declaration at all. This leaves Alberta shippers without the kind of real-time freight visibility that large private logistics operators already provide for their own supply chains.

The federal government should extend the proposed Canada Marine Act data-authority amendments beyond terminal operators to include Class I rail carriers and federally regulated trucking, so that supply chain visibility data follows the shipment past the port; pursue public-private data-sharing agreements with existing commercial freight-visibility providers rather than building parallel tracking infrastructure from scratch; and formally engage PNWER's cross-border supply chain working group and its recommended unified digital trade platform and electronic certificate-of-origin system as the vehicle for Alberta-specific implementation.

- **Improve the competitiveness of Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS) projects**

Bioenergy with carbon capture and storage projects represent a significant opportunity to attract investment, create jobs, support economic growth, and advance Canada's climate objectives.

The Government of Canada should increase the eligible investment rate for BECCS projects under the Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage Investment Tax Credit from 50 per cent to 60 per cent, on par with Direct Air Capture (DAC) equipment. BECCS and DAC are widely recognized as the only two carbon-removal technologies in the CCUS program, as most of the other technologies are fossil point-source capture that reduces emissions, rather than removing them. This targeted adjustment would improve project viability, unlock private-sector investment, and support the development of innovative Canadian clean-energy infrastructure projects.

About the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce

For over 137 years, the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce has championed growth, innovation, and profitability in Edmonton's business community. Representing members ranging from small businesses to large enterprises across all sectors, we advocate for their interests at all orders of government, fostering a thriving and sustainable business environment. Our strategic partnerships and innovative services empower businesses to succeed and contribute to Edmonton's prosperity.

The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce acknowledges that we conduct our business on Treaty 6 territory and the Métis Homeland, the ancestral lands of the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway, Saulteaux. Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others. These lands, known as ᐊᒥᐢᑲᐧᒋᐚᐢᑲᐦᐃᑲᐣ/amiskwaciwâskahikan, have been a center of trade and innovation for Indigenous peoples since time immemorial.
We honour the contributions of Indigenous entrepreneurs and are committed to fostering partnerships that recognize and respect Indigenous business practices. In the spirit of Reconciliation, we strive to include and empower Indigenous voices in our business community, building a strong and inclusive Edmonton together.