

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ombudsman Addresses Top Issues for Economic Development Related to Our Local Businesses

Windsor-Essex County, Ontario, - Thursday, January 16, 2014 – Today, Charles Sousa, Minister of Finance, was in Windsor to continue the Ontario Government's province-wide tour of 2014 pre-budget discussions. Individuals, organizations, associations and other stakeholders were at the Waterfront Hotel Downtown and had the opportunity to provide views regarding what more the government can do to create jobs and improve services for people, while eliminating the deficit.

Marion Fantetti, Business Ombudsman with the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation was invited and presented to Minister Sousa four key areas of concern surrounding the economic growth of the Windsor-Essex region as it relates to, **Business Retention & Business Expansion, Business Attraction and the Small Business Centre.**

In terms of **Business Retention & Expansion and Business Attraction**, Fantetti highlighted the following priorities to help create jobs and improve services:

Incentive Programs: Establish incentive programs in order to compete and attract investors,

Energy Costs: Provide lower energy cost,

Training: Focus on Science and Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) with employer input and opportunity for training,

Regulatory Environment: Anything the government can do to reduce the regulatory burden is helpful – it's too onerous to navigate.

In addressing the priorities of the **Small Business Centre** who specifically engages the small business community and wants them to grow, there are three key areas they would like the Ontario Government to prioritize:

Finance: Providing support for start-ups by extending assistance of micro loans for youth to early retirees who are showing a trend towards entrepreneurship,

Market Access: Helping our businesses go global and making it easier for them to gain access to new markets,

Environment: Keeping processes with rules and regulations simple and less burdensome for small and medium sized businesses that don't have the resources to address massive regulatory requirements to run their business.

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