

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, July 21, 2017

**PREPARING FOR THE RENEGOTIATION OF NAFTA
LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS COLLABORATE TO BENEFIT WINDSOR-ESSEX**

Windsor-Essex County, Ontario – Friday, July 21, 2017– A number of local organizations met this week to discuss working together on a strategy to support the Windsor-Essex business community in preparation of the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation, the Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Windsor-Essex, the Cross Border Institute, and the Institute for Border Logistics and Security, along with provincial and federal partners are committed to promote economic prosperity across all municipalities in the Windsor-Essex region. This group will help identify the key issues and priorities and look for opportunities for workers, businesses, communities and cross-border commuters in our region. The collective efforts will include: a coordinated survey seeking local input, workshops and information sessions, and submissions to governments highlighting the importance of preserving and strengthening a fair and free trade across North America.

Stephen MacKenzie, CEO of the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation stated, “Windsor-Essex is at the front line of NAFTA and this coordinated approach is designed to help keep local businesses informed about the current NAFTA, and the potential impacts of the renegotiations. We will monitor this process and work with our clients and communities to make sure their needs are represented.”

Matt Marchand, CEO of the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce added, “This collaborative working group will identify key issues that can be fed into the NAFTA negotiation process through our local MP’s and networks to help maximize our voice and will allow us to position our region for the future.”

Michelle Suchiu, Executive Director of Workforce WindsorEssex said, “We look forward to working with our partners to survey businesses and cross-border commuters about what’s working and what could be improved in the renegotiation of NAFTA. Our region has an important story to share about our region’s unique and highly-integrated cross border relationship with the United States and Mexico.”

Dr. Bill Anderson, Director of the Cross-Border Institute at the University of Windsor, said "Cross-border supply chains are key for the integration of the local Canada-US economy. Fluidity is critical to maintain our high level of economic integration and prosperity that trade makes possible. Any changes to NAFTA must reduce the cost and impediments to trade."

The renegotiation of NAFTA offers an opportunity to update the agreement to reflect today's modern economy. Canada's trading relationship with Mexico and the United States of America is critically important nationally, regionally and locally. The Windsor-Essex region provides a unique perspective on the impact of NAFTA. Working together, local organizations will seek to ensure that the best interests of the Windsor-Essex region are recognized and promoted.

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