



## Media Release

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***For Immediate Release  
Monday, May 4, 2004***

### ***Timmins Chamber policy unanimously supported by Ontario Chamber***

**Timmins** – A policy developed by the Timmins Chamber of Commerce was adopted by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) during its annual general meeting held in Hockley Valley over the weekend of May 1-3. The policy, entitled ***Improving the competitiveness of Ontario industries through fuel tax rebates for off-highway road transport*** was unanimously supported by delegates of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. Supporting the Timmins Chamber policy signifies that the Ontario Chamber will add its efforts and influence towards advocating for the implementation policy's recommendations, calling for the provincial government to provide fuel tax rebates to industries for all fuel that is consumed on non-Crown roadways.

According to Chamber president Rob Galloway, the issue was identified by the Natural Resources Committee at the Chamber. "Our committees meet on a monthly basis to bring forth issues important to the membership. When an issue is brought to our attention, and it is one that we can use the broader chamber network to work effect change, we jump at the chance to set our advocacy efforts in motion, which is exactly what happened with the fuel tax issue."

Under the current legislation, there is no provision to rebate the tax paid on fuel consumed in the off-road portion of a "mixed-road" haul - a haul that includes both off-road travel and travel on provincially-maintained roads and highways. When trucks haul resources, such as ore to refineries and wood to mills, within the province, a significant portion of fuel (estimated at 50% for forestry) is consumed while driving on off-highway access roads built and maintained by industry. Equipment and vehicles that are not used on public roads and operated by any business, industry or institution, can legally be fueled by tax-exempt fuel. However, equipment or vehicles that travel on public roads must be licensed, and as such are not permitted to use tax-exempt fuel. As a result, licensed vehicles are necessary for "mixed-road" hauls and businesses are forced to pay tax on the fuel consumed on the off-highway access roads. The Timmins Chamber policy calls for the provincial government to provide a rebate to companies in the exact amount for the fuel tax paid on the off-road portion of mixed-road hauls. Alberta is one province that already has a mechanism in place providing rebates to industry for the tax paid on fuel consumed in off-road transportation.

According to President Galloway, change would be a step in the right direction towards improving Ontario's competitiveness nationally and internationally. "If Ontario wants to create a competitive tax and regulatory regime, it must at a minimum allow for the same beneficial tax provisions that are in effect in other provinces. It's the intent of this policy to advocate for one improvement that the provincial government can undertake that will make Ontario a better jurisdiction in which to business. We've heard it from our member businesses and now with the support of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce behind our policy, it is something for which we are going to continue to advocate," explained Galloway.

The Timmins Chamber policy is one of 15 policies supported at the OCC's AGM. **To read the policy *Improving the competitiveness of Ontario industries through fuel tax rebates for off-highway road transport*, visit [www.timminschamber.on.ca/policies.htm](http://www.timminschamber.on.ca/policies.htm).**

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***About the Timmins Chamber of Commerce***

*With over 750 members, the Timmins Chamber of Commerce is the largest accredited chamber of commerce with distinction in northeastern Ontario. As the "Voice of Business in Timmins" since 1949, our advocacy and policy initiatives focus on ensuring a positive business climate in the City of Timmins.*