



MEDIA RELEASE

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Board of Trade welcomes LMI report; urges governments to act on recommendations immediately

The final report of the Advisory Panel on Labour Market Information is a vital step forward to ensure that the modern labour market is functioning efficiently and effectively in support of the economy, according to the St. John's Board of Trade. '*Working Together to Build a Better Labour Market Information System for Canada*' provides a blueprint for federal, provincial and territorial governments to address pressing needs in labour market information.

"The Board of Trade welcomes this report and was pleased to have contributed to it through involvement in local consultations," said Board Chair Bruce Templeton. "We are particularly pleased that the report paints a clear picture – good and bad – of the existing labour market information system so that governments can take specific action based on expert advice."

The Board urges the Governments of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador to immediately implement the recommendations of the Advisory Panel, chaired by Don Drummond. Immediate action will fix the current system's inability to chart work flows, job vacancies and labour costs.

"A labour market information system that is underperforming translates into an economy that is underperforming. Business, labour and individuals need an optimal system because it means more jobs, higher paying jobs, increased international competitiveness, and enhanced productivity. Investment in this system is an investment in job and economic growth."

The Board is encouraged that the final report shows a clear path forward, including the required investment by governments across the country. Specifically, the Board welcomes the report's recommendation that federal-provincial-territorial governments share in the costs and develop a partnership to help advance national needs. Also, the Board is very much encouraged by a budget of \$50 million that could raise GDP by hundreds of millions, a strong return on investment.

"This is exactly the type of investment the Board likes to see from governments. This investment creates positive systemic changes in a sustainable way. It creates partnerships between governments and between business and labour. And it provides a real value to taxpayers. If this \$50 million investment creates one-tenth of a point drop in unemployment or a similar sized increase in wages, we could add \$800 million to national GDP and put many people to work."

The Board particularly welcomes the following concepts and recommendations from the report:

- Better data from jurisdictions with smaller populations;
- Gathering better information on the phenomena of workers who live in one province and work in another;
- Making all labour market data on CANSIM (Canadian Socio-economic Information Management System) free of charge;
- Establishing a single information portal for access to all available labour market information;
- Basing system improvements on meeting future needs rather than recording history; and,
- Generating better information on local labour markets to help people find a job in their own area and help displaced workers become reemployed.

“What a system change would mean to local business is more employment, more attachment to the labour force, and a decrease in the mismatch between employee skill set and job requirement. This is created through better information on the labour supply, a better ability to look ahead and plan for human resource needs, and a way to develop new business opportunities by seeing trends in labour availability, skills, and wages. This type of information can help business, specifically the small and medium size enterprises that make up the majority of the Board’s membership, predict areas for strong growth and expansion.”

The Board of Trade also noted its satisfaction with the Advisory Committee’s process, noting that consultations took place across Canada. As the voice of business in the community, the Board participated in these consultations on a local level, and welcomes further collaboration.

The St. John’s Board of Trade is a non-partisan, business advocacy organization that is the principal voice of business for over 700 members in the St. John’s area. Its mission is to improve the local business climate, enhancing its members’ ability to do business through advocacy and member services.

The final report can be found at <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-eng.do?nid=464699>.