



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*For Immediate release*

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# **Board opposes fuel surcharge hike by Marine Atlantic; national resolution offers long-term solutions**

The St. John's Board of Trade expressed its disappointment with, and opposition to, an increase to the fuel surcharge by Marine Atlantic. The surcharge has more than doubled, from six per cent, to 13.8%, driving up costs for people and businesses on both sides of the Gulf.

“Again, we see costs being passed on to travelers and businesses on the Island but also on the mainland,” said Board Chair Bruce Templeton. “As much as these costs hurt the economy we have been building in Newfoundland and Labrador, they also hurt the economies of our Atlantic partners and other Canadian provinces. I’m not sure the federal government fully understands those implications.”

Over the weekend, the Board of Trade worked to raise this issue on the national level through its participation in the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting. Senior Vice Chair of the Board Derek Sullivan put forward the national economic case for Marine Atlantic investment to get national advocacy work going on this issue.

“I was pleased with the results of our work at the Canadian Chamber AGM,” said Mr. Sullivan. “We emphasized the need for a workable trade corridor to and from our booming province, and the need for a vision to meet the economic needs of the future. Seeing how the resolution passed unanimously, it leads the Board to believe that people are starting to get the message that Marine Atlantic is not a ‘Newfoundland transportation problem’ but a genuine national economic issue.”

The Board of Trade resolution, which will now be national policy that the Canadian Chamber advocates for at the federal government level, encourages the Government of Canada to truly understand the national impacts of challenges with the Marine Atlantic service. Specifically, it encourages supporting Marine Atlantic as an economic tool for all provinces, moving forward on vessel replacement, and implementing essential service designation.

“As an island, we have limited travel and transportation options,” said Mr. Templeton. “Marine Atlantic’s connection is imperative to growth of our economy and the economies of other provinces. Making it more costly to move passengers and goods is counter-productive to continuing to build a province that is making and wants to continue to make a net contribution to the country.”

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.

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Attachment: Marine Atlantic resolution adopted by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce

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