

January 11, 2011

Bruce McCuaig  
President & CEO  
Metrolinx  
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**Subject: Follow up to December 2011 Meeting with GTHA Chambers**

Dear Bruce,

Thank you for taking time to present and discuss the Big Move with the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) chambers. The discussion was informative and fruitful and a good start to what we see as a productive relationship between Metrolinx, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) and the business community in Ontario.

We agree that a strong, efficient, integrated transportation network is integral to the future competitiveness of the region. The GTHA chambers strongly believe transportation infrastructure investments are vital to economic growth and productivity, particularly in light of the uncertainty facing the Ontario economy. Congestion results in lost trade opportunities, jeopardizes employee recruitment and retention and limits economic development. As a GTHA business community, we support the plan and understand the need for new revenue sources to fund the \$36 billion shortfall to move the plan forward. We have outlined some features that we feel, from a business perspective, would need to be part of any investment plan for the Big Move.

**1) Transparency**

The GTHA chambers emphasize the need for transparency around how the earmarked, targeted funding will be used. In addition, transparency and rationale of the project selection process and the correlating project prioritization will help to build support for the Big Move in local communities across the region.

**2) Dedicated Funding**

The GTHA chambers see dedicated funding for transit and transportation projects as a key component of the strategy. An annual plan outlining where funds will be allocated is a priority. Dedicated funding will ensure the public and business community can track investment vs. outcomes as the projects are rolled out.

**3) Revenue Tools**

The GTHA chambers want to better understand what specific tools are being proposed and details on who they would apply to and in which areas of the province they would be implemented. The chambers would like adequate time to analyse the proposal before it is released and comment on its feasibility.

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#### **4) Wage Restraint**

The GTHA chambers are concerned about the increasing costs of public sector wages. Public sector compensation restraint is key to our future economic competitiveness, as new infrastructure will increase operation costs.

#### **5) Alternative Funding**

The GTHA chambers recommend utilizing alternative funding strategies such as bond issues and private financing wherever possible. Given the current state of the province's finances and with limited prospects for a significant turnaround in the near future, there is opportunity to transition away from a public financing model for building transportation infrastructure and explore other credible alternatives. Models already exist such as the toll highway and GO Transit.

#### **6) Use private sector**

The GTHA chambers encourage the use of private sector arrangements in the future wherever possible following the example of the Air Rail Link.

#### **7) Community Engagement**

It will be important for Metrolinx to ensure that each GTA community understands what the 'win' will be for them. This could be an opportunity for Metrolinx to work with chambers to inform them of the status and relevancy of projects and build support at the local level.

We are happy to support Metrolinx as it moves forward with developing and building political will and public support for an investment strategy. We would like to work together to develop support in communities across the GTHA for the Big Move to ensure the projects are implemented on time, and on budget. The chamber network looks forward to acting as an interface between Metrolinx and the GTA business community. We are happy to share information with our members and to help Metrolinx engage with them. Anything that Metrolinx can do with our support to help facilitate a cultural shift towards transit would also be helpful.

Thank you again for your presentation. We look forward to working with you in the future. If you have questions or comments or would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact Angie Brennand at 416.482.5222 ext.232 or [angiebrennand@occ.on.ca](mailto:angiebrennand@occ.on.ca).

Yours sincerely,

Len Crispino and the following GTHA chambers

