

Implementation of a One Business Number: Hamilton Chamber of Commerce

Please select which category from the OCC economic vision best represents your issue (please **bold** your choice):

- Fostering a culture of innovation and smart risk-taking in order to become a productivity leader
- Building a 21st century workforce through workplace training, utilizing newcomers' skills, and apprenticeship reform
- **Restoring fiscal balance by improving the way government works**
- Taking advantage of new opportunities in the global economy
- Identifying, championing, and strategically investing in our competitive advantages in the global economy
- Other policies of strategic significance

Issue:

Government programs serving the business community require a means of establishing and managing client identity. In Canada, the multiplicity of business-government interfaces at each level of government its associated programs has resulted in various numbers and types of business client identifiers assigned to an individual business.

The Business Number (BN) provisioned through the Federal Government has been adopted in various provinces for various uses, with its implementation resulting in reduced red tape and cost savings for businesses.

The Province of Ontario (through Service Ontario) has engaged with municipalities over the last decade on the prospect of adopting a common business number to ease government red tape and reduce inefficiencies. The BN is currently being utilized in Ontario for a limited number of purposes.

We would like to the government to explore and implement to fully implement use of a singular BN in collaboration with interested municipalities.

Background:

Any business owner in Canada deals with all three levels of government separately. These interactions, especially for business startups have plenty of overlap leading to paperwork redundancy.

In Ontario, ServiceOntario is the Ontario government's primary public-facing service delivery organization, with responsibility for delivering information and high-volume routine, rules-based transactions to both individuals and businesses.

The national Business Number was developed by the Federal Government in the 1990s to enable both business and government to streamline operations and realize efficiencies. With the BN, businesses are assigned a single registration number for their dealings with various participating public sector programs.

In Ontario, the BN is currently used by businesses for taxation returns, occupational health and safety, employment standards and labour disputes. However, in other provinces the BN has been successfully implemented for registries, licensing, procurement, application for permits and reception of government benefits¹.

¹ Business Number Case for Action, One Business, One Number. 2012. Public Sector Service Delivery Council: Service to Business Task Force

A number of municipalities including City of Ottawa, London, Hamilton², Windsor, and Toronto have also officially declared an interest in pursuing a singular BN, some of them even signing MOU's with Service Ontario. While in other jurisdictions, official governmental reviews have recommended the adoption of a BN³. Alberta happens to be the most prominent recent jurisdictional example with the passing of Bill 12 : Common Business Number act on March 25th 2015⁴ paving the way as a model for Ontario to follow.

Recommendations:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Explore the Implementation of a common BN for an expanded set of applications, including but not limited to the following:
 - Registration
 - Licensing
 - Procurement
 - Permit Application
 - Benefits
2. Explore the implementation of BN in collaboration with interested Municipalities

Estimated Financial Impact to the Province (For AGM discussion-purposes only - will not appear in final compendium)

Please choose which option best fits your resolution (please **bold** the option).

Given the current economic climate, solutions to create a smarter, more fiscally sustainable government are a priority.

- **Create cost-savings for the government**
- Be cost-neutral to the government
- **Entail a small cost to government (less than \$10M)**
- Entail a medium cost to government (between \$10M and \$200M)
- Entail a large cost to government (higher than \$200M)

² http://www.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/ECC006D4-5AEE-4841-8A4C-9883E8EE1468/0/Jun13EDRMS_n180480_v1_5_9_CM11010.pdf

³ http://www.novascotia.ca/finance/docs/tr/Tax_and_Regulatory_Review_Nov_2014.pdf

⁴ http://www.assembly.ab.ca/ISYS/LADDAR_files/docs/bills/bill/legislature_28/session_3/20141117_bill-012.pdf