



11 May 2017

Hon. Donald Arseneault, Minister
Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB
E3B 5H1

Re: Family Day Economic Impact Analysis

Dear Minister Arseneault,

We are writing to you today to enquire about the economic impact analysis completed by the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour prior to the April 26, 2017 announcement that the Government of New Brunswick would be adding a winter statutory holiday beginning in February 2018.

We wrote to Minister Rogers on May 2, 2017 with the same request, based on her statement in a February 15, 2016 GNB news release that stated: "We will weigh all the factors when making this decision, including the impacts for both employees and employers." Media reports from April 2017 also indicated that government had multiple departments analyzing the impact of an additional statutory holiday. That letter is attached, marked Appendix A. We received a response from the minister dated May 9, 2017 (attached, marked Appendix B) which stated, in part:

"Government held seven Family Plan-related summits across the province and one common theme throughout all of them is that people want to have more time to spend with their families. This theme is further validated by a 2016 Statistics Canada report that shows a lack of time for family was the main concern for parents not satisfied with work-life balance."

It appears that the Family Plan summits were geared towards social issues and not meant to obtain a business perspective on the issues discussed, including the impact of an additional statutory holiday. Minister Rogers' response does not mention any other analysis completed by government departments that has been referenced by media and government.

While we certainly agree that work-life balance is important, we submit that this is but one factor that should have been considered as part of the of the decision-making process in this case. Of equal



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importance is supporting small business and ensuring that decisions of this nature are made with all the evidence available. It is also unclear why an additional statutory holiday was considered the best choice to address the issue of work-life balance.

Minister Rogers further referred us to you and your department as public holidays fall under the purview of the Department of Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour.

We are left with the following questions:

1. Were these summits the full extent of the government's 'economic impact analysis' regarding the effect that an additional holiday would have on small business and the New Brunswick economy generally, as Minister Rogers' letter suggests?
2. If not, may we receive a copy of the economic impact analysis that was completed?

Thank you for your attention to this matter, we look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Simmonds'.

Paul Simmonds
Robert Simmonds Clothing
President, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Krista Ross'.

Krista Ross, CEO
Fredericton Chamber of Commerce

cc: Hon. Cathy Rogers, Minister of Finance
cc: Chair, NB Coalition of Employers