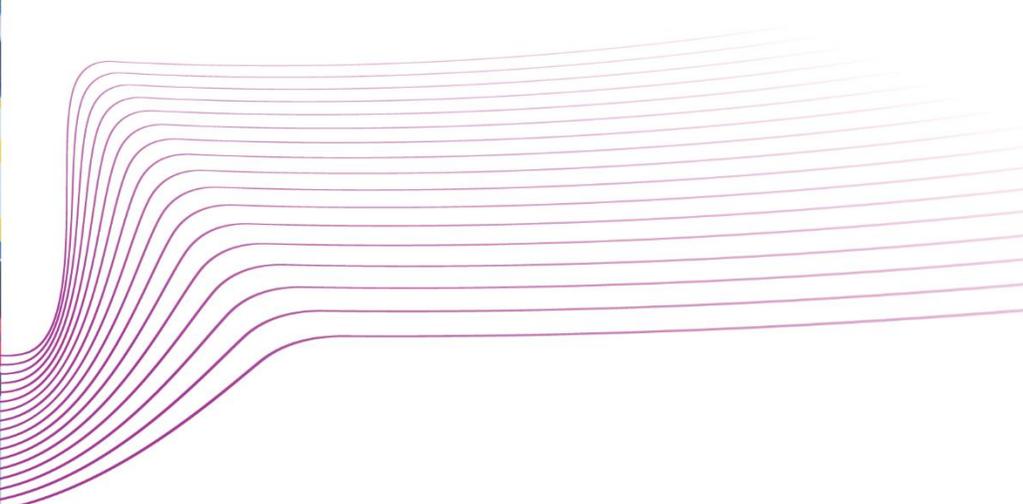




KNOW WHAT'S ON BC'S MIND.

**POLICY IS ON BC'S MIND:
THE 2019 POLICY DEVELOPMENT GUIDE**

bcchamber.org



BC Chamber of Commerce
Know what's on BC's mind.

People aren't into hard. At the end of the day, good policy work is about getting the job done. The way to innovate – and make sure #PolicyIsSexy - is to make things easy. We're here to make it simple for you and your members. This guide is available to member chambers of commerce/boards of trade to make your participation in the 2019 BC Chamber policy development cycle simple. The guide allows chambers/boards to navigate the policy development process from identifying the issues to submitting the policy by the deadline of March 8, 2019 all the way to preparing for the 2019 BC Chamber AGM policy session in Burnaby.

What you'll find in this guide is the:

- 5 Steps to Successful Policy Development 3
- Policy Resolution Checklist 4
- Resolution Template 5
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If you have any questions regarding the Policy Development Guide or the BC Chamber policy development process, please don't hesitate to contact either:

Peter Andreasen, Manager of Policy Development & Government Relations at pandreasen@bcchamber.org.

Dan Baxter, Director of Policy Development, Government & Stakeholder Relations at dbaxter@bcchamber.org, or

5 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Step 1

Identify Issues

Step 2

Draft Resolution

Step 3

Examine the Resolution Checklist

Step 4

Advise the BC Chamber

Step 5

Sign-up for the AGM

Step 1 – Identify your issue(s)

Working with your members and other stakeholders, find out what concerns are on the mind of your business community and what actions government must take to address those concerns.

Once these issues and insights are identified, they should be evaluated against the BC Chamber’s policy resolution criteria, which are:

1. Provincial or national in nature (*in short does this affect all, or a significant number of businesses in all regions of the province*);
2. General in application to the economic well-being of the province;
3. Timely in nature; and
4. Well-written and well-researched.

Step 2 – Draft your resolution(s)

All draft resolutions should be presented in a common format that includes the following elements: an *appropriate title*, an *opening statement* outlining the issue, a *background* description that details the problem (including any data in the form of **sourced** facts and figures), and pointed, actionable *recommendations to government* that will strengthen our economy by addressing the issue.

Step 3 – Examine the resolution checklist

Review the resolution checklist to ensure that your resolution provides informed and insightful debate at the AGM and creates a strong product for the BC Chamber network’s deep engagement through our collaborative advocacy efforts.

Step 4 – Advise the BC Chamber of your resolution

Submit your properly formatted policy resolution to the BC Chamber by email to pandreasen@bccchamber.org copied to dbaxter@bccchamber.org no later than **March 8, 2019**.

Step 5 – Sign-up to attend the BC Chamber AGM

This is your Chamber’s chance to shine. All policy resolutions are presented and debated on the floor of the policy session at the AGM.

THE POLICY RESOLUTION CHECKLIST

The BC Chamber policy development process provides chambers a valuable opportunity to know what's on the mind of their respective business community. At the same time, our bottom-up, grassroots process provides quality local insights to ensure provincial concerns have a vehicle to address them, which supports the likelihood of government acting on our recommendations. With this in mind, the following information is provided to help you and your members navigate through the process of defining and developing your policy resolution.

If you can “check the box” beside the following questions, you should have a quality resolution that will greatly enhance your efforts of gaining the support of the Policy Review Committee (PRC) and, more importantly, the approval of your fellow members at the BC Chamber AGM. Equally true, the BC Chamber network will be provided an informed, insightful debate during the policy session which, in turn, will provide a strong base for deeper engagement and advocacy as we take the issue forward to the appropriate level of government.

Is this an issue that your members want addressed?

Chambers must ensure that the issues they present are representative of the issues that are of genuine concern to their members. To accomplish this, Chambers should drive a proactive engagement effort with their key stakeholders to identify concerns. This can be done through any number of ways, such as surveys, roundtables, or through the Board engagement; but, unless the issues are of concern to your business community, there will be minimal benefit of participating in the process.

The value of the policy process is that Chambers can showcase the network's proactive nature in addressing the issues impacting the business community and the broader provincial and/or national economy.

Chambers should develop a process for approval of the issues they are looking to advance. This can be done through your Board of Directors or it can be a more formal process involving the broader membership. Either way, the goal is to have buy-in from your Chamber.

Is it a “BC Chamber” issue?

To “check the box” to this questions, Chambers must be confident that the issue meets the BC Chamber criteria as outlined in our bylaws. These criteria, again, are:

1. Provincial or national in nature (in short does this affect all or a significant number of businesses in all regions of the province);
2. General in application to the economic well-being of the province;
3. Timely in nature; and
4. Well-written and well-researched.

If the issue does not meet these criteria, the submitting Chamber should determine whether the issue can be addressed through other means such as local government, industry associations, etc.

□ **Is the proposed resolution well-researched and well-written?**

The BC Chamber requires resolutions to be well-researched and well-written. In short, resolutions should be a mini business case on the issue.

The preamble of the resolution should be as detailed as required - but still sharp and concise as possible - to provide the reader with the information needed to have a full understanding of the issue. In addition, the resolution should also give a rational, structured argument that presents a compelling case for government to act and why this will improve the business environment and power the people who grow B.C.

This will need some research prior to drafting the resolution. Whether it is BC Stats, Stats Canada, federal and/or provincial government websites or vertical business organizations, there are numerous places where data can be found to help power our insights. Chambers are great at sharing and borrowing, so don't hesitate to lean of each other. Remember, as long as data or material is sourced, it can likely be used in a BC Chamber resolution.

If a resolution contains statistics or quotes that are sourced, provide the link is possible. Remember, the accuracy of the reference in the resolution cannot be verified if we don't know where to find it.

□ **Is this a business issue?**

Many issues will be important to communities and many businesses will care deeply about an issue, this does not, however, necessarily make it an issue of concern for an organization that is among the most relevant voices of B.C. businesses. Chambers should endeavour to review issues in order to determine the impacts a given issue has on the day-to-day operations of a business.

For issues that don't meet this criterion, the question becomes to what extent will the Chamber add value to the issue? There are other avenues open to communities to deal with these issues, whether its resolutions through local governments to UBCM, sector-specific organizations to name a few.

□ **Is this a new issue that does not conflict with or duplicate existing Chamber policy?**

Chambers should check to ensure that their issue is not the same, or substantially similar, to an existing BC Chamber policy already on the books. If there is an existing policy statement that in some way addresses your issue, Chambers may want to review the current policy statement to see if amendments would fully address the issue of concern.

Further to this, Chambers should also review current policy statements to determine whether their recommendations conflict with the existing policy statement. If there is a conflict, then delegates at the AGM will be asked to decide which one is the appropriate policy direction for the BC Chamber, and as such the submitting Chamber should provide an explanation as to why this change in policy direction should be made.

□ **Do you know how much implementing the resolution will cost the government?**

As a network that has been a staunch advocate for balanced budgets and fiscally-responsible government, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that any recommendation that increases government expenditure (i.e. a new spending program) or decreases government revenues (i.e. tax cuts) includes a rough estimate of the cost to government.

Further to this, as a fiscally-minded organization like all Chambers are, the BC Chamber believes that any recommendation that will have an impact on government budgets should endeavour to include some direction to government as to where this money should come from: should government increase taxes or should they direct money away from other areas of program spending?

□ **How does this fit with government's agenda?**

The basic nature of policy resolutions is to change or influence the government's policy agenda. As such, to draft the resolutions with no recognition of the challenges and concerns of government at both the elected and bureaucratic level will impede our ability to have government act on our recommendations.

The BC Chamber recommends that Chambers ask the following questions:

- Is the policy compatible with government needs and priorities? Except in special circumstances, does the resolution have a reasonable potential to be accepted by the applicable government?
- Do the recommendations unduly tie the hands of government as a method of meeting the objectives?
- Does the policy demonstrate an understanding of the issue and an awareness of government policy/behaviour in the relevant area?
- What opposition will the recommendation face? One of government's key roles is to provide balance between competing interests; it is, therefore, important that we are able to counter these objections.

□ **Have you built support?**

Building support for the resolution among fellow Chambers in advance of the AGM is an important part of ensuring that your resolution will pass.

The culmination of the policy development process is the policy session at the AGM where all resolutions are presented, debated and voted upon. The process for presentation of resolutions allows the submitting chamber the opportunity to present their resolution on the floor. Further to this, the debate often involves questions that require the submitting chamber to answer. It is, therefore, important that chambers who have submitted resolutions attend the AGM to present their resolutions at the policy sessions.

RESOLUTION TEMPLATE - WHAT A PROPOSED RESOLUTION LOOKS LIKE

Each resolution that is adopted at the BC Chamber AGM is published in the BC Chamber Policy & Positions Manual. It is, therefore, important that all resolutions follow several simple guidelines to ensure maximum congruency and consistency across the network.

The most important element is to ensure that the basic structure is consistent. This not only aids the work of the PRC, but it also reduces the amount of work required by staff to edit proposed resolutions.

The BC Chamber believes that following this format will ensure that the reader is presented with a clearly-defined and well-researched resolution that lays out the issue and provides easy to understand recommendations on how this should be addressed that is consistent across the entire platform. This will allow the audience, be they a Minister, MLA, media or a member of the public, to fully understand the issue and the Chamber's recommendations.

Title

Each resolution should begin with an appropriate title that allows the reader to understand what the issue is that the resolution is intended to address.

Opening Statement

This should be a short paragraph that explains what issue the resolution is addressing.

Background

There should then be a description that details the problem, including relevant facts and figures.

Recommendations

There should then be a recommendation, or series of recommendations, on how the problem could be solved.

Specific recommendations should be numbered. With any sub-recommendations listed beneath the appropriate recommendation and indented as suggested below:

THE CHAMBER RECOMMENDS

That the Provincial Government:

1. <List recommendations>;
2. <List recommendations >
 - a. <Sub-bullet 1>; and
3. <List recommendations >

Submitted by the _____ Chamber of Commerce (or Board of Trade, if appropriate)

Remember, a simple test for Chambers to perform is to read the resolution as if they had no understanding of the issue. While reading the resolution, look to see if the resolution is properly researched and the background material factual, detailed and complete. Does the resolution provide you with an understanding of the issue and provide clear, simple (read: easy) to understand recommendations on how government should address this issue?

Further, there are some simple stylistic rules we ask Chambers to adhere to as they draft their resolution. These are as follows:

- ❖ When referring to a Chamber (either the BC or a local) always try to use the reference ‘the Chamber.’
- ❖ Bullet points should be consistent,

<Normal text>:

- List bullet;
 - List bullet
 - Sub-bullet 1; and
 - List bullet.
- ❖ When referencing government, please identify the level of government; if you are referring to the provincial government, please indicate that.
 - ❖ When using facts, figures or quotes, please source the quote, including full details of publication, author’s name and web address, if possible, as a footnote to the resolution.
 - ❖ Proposed resolutions must be submitted as a clean word document (**no logos**).

The BC Chamber has provided a policy resolution template with all the correct formatting. All Chambers need to do is click ‘n type in the appropriate sections and you’ll have a properly formatted resolution.

These simple guidelines ensure that the Policy & Positions Manual is consistent in style and layout and reduces the time and effort required to ensure congruency and consistency and, thereby, allowing for more time to focus on the issue itself.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. WHAT IS THE CLOSING DATE FOR PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS?

In keeping with the bylaws of the BC Chamber, proposed resolutions must be submitted to the BC Chamber office no later than 75 days prior to the BC Chamber AGM. **For 2019**, this means the closing date will be **March 9**

While this is the latest that resolutions can be submitted, we encourage chambers of commerce/boards of trade to submit their resolutions as early as possible. The earlier a resolution is received, the sooner it can be reviewed by the Policy Review Committee (PRC) and amendments made, if needed.

2. WHAT IF I MISS THE DEADLINE?

The BC Chamber does have a Late Resolution process. Further details on that process will be provided after the closing date. Chambers/Boards should bear in mind that a late resolution will only be accepted and moved to the AGM if there is a valid reason as to why it could not have been submitted by the closing date.

3. WHAT HAPPENS TO A RESOLUTION AFTER IT IS SUBMITTED?

It will be reviewed by the Policy Review Committee (PRC). The committee will use its expertise to review each policy resolution to ensure that it meets the BC Chamber policy criteria. Further to this, the PRC will assess whether the resolution is in keeping with current BC Chamber policy positions, presents a clear case for action and that the recommendations are the correct mechanisms to address the issue.

In certain cases, the committee may feel that the policy resolution lacks either the appropriate background material or does not fully address the issue. In these cases, a conference call with the submitting chamber, the BC Chamber and the appropriate policy review committee members will be convened to discuss the concerns of the committee and to provide input on ways these concerns can be addressed. Where these concerns cannot be addressed the committee will outline the reasons for the lack of support to the submitting chamber.

It is important to note here that the PRC does not do the work of the submitting member, but where they have information that would improve the calibre of the material the committee will bring it to the attention of the submitting chamber.

The recommendations of the PRC are just that, a recommendation. If a chamber takes the time and effort to draft a policy resolution, it **WILL** be submitted to the policy session of the AGM and the submitting chamber will be provided the opportunity to defend the resolution on the floor at the policy session.

4. WHAT IF WE WANT TO CHANGE CURRENT POLICY ALREADY IN THE MANUAL?

The BC Chamber Policy and Positions Manual is a physical representation of the concerns and recommendations of our members. As such, it is a constantly evolving document. Once a resolution is adopted by delegates at the AGM it becomes official policy of the BC Chamber for three years from the date of adoption. This means that any policy dated 2016 is due to expire at this year's AGM.

If a chamber wishes to revise a current policy we would ask that the chamber track the changes they wish to make and submit the amendments by the same date they submit new policy resolutions; **March 8, 2019**.

Following receipt of the amendments the PRC will review the changes to ensure they meet the criteria and strengthens the policy statement. Following this review the resolution will be treated as a new resolution and dealt with accordingly at the AGM.

5. WHAT IF A POLICY IS STILL RELEVANT BUT IS DUE TO EXPIRE?

Once again, the key here is to ensure that this process is as open and inclusive as possible. Policy resolutions are given a lifespan of three years to ensure that the manual stays as relevant as possible and that the recommendations to government remain relevant.

If a member chamber believes a current policy warrants being retained, the chamber can resubmit the policy through the standard policy process. Prior to this happening, chambers must assess the policy to determine whether it remains relevant or if it requires updating to reflect circumstances over the past 3 years.

Once submitted the proposed resolution will be assessed by the PRC as a new resolution and presented to the AGM as a new issue.

6. WHAT OTHER THINGS SHOULD I CONSIDER?

One of the key issues for Chambers when drafting policy is where does the government stand on the issue. Are there announcements or programs that address the issue? Is there a government announcement that is an impediment to the recommendations?

To ensure that these are addressed during the 2019 process, Chambers should be aware that the provincial government will deliver its Throne Speech on February 12, 2019 laying out its agenda, to be followed by the 2019 BC Budget on February 19, 2019.

Both of these events contain significant indications of government intentions on a range of programs and initiatives that may impact your proposed resolution. The BC Chamber will provide analysis of both of these announcements.