

COALITION OF BC BUSINESSES

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New Industry Training Act will lead to more marketable skills

Vancouver – B.C.'s small and medium-sized business community says a new Industry Training Act introduced today by the government will bring much needed flexibility to the province's industry training system and ensure a better match between the training received and the needs of today's workplace.

"The new Act will ensure B.C.'s small and medium-sized businesses will now have a direct voice in designing the training suited to their business needs," said Philip Hochstein, Chair of the Coalition of BC Businesses, the group representing small businesses on labour and employment matters. "It will also lead to the elimination of bureaucracy and red tape by putting in place an improved governance, management and training structure."

The previous training system was designed as a one-size-fits-all approach better suited to large industrial employers. Today's employers of apprentices are overwhelmingly small businesses, each with their own unique skill requirements.

Hochstein said the old system did not serve trainees well adding that the new system will be flexible enough to handle the requirements of both small and large businesses. It will also reverse a trend that has seen 50 per cent of apprentices in B.C. drop out before completion of their programs and allow for better integration of the education received in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 school system with job opportunities available in the economy.

Hochstein said only one out of every 150 senior secondary students is enrolled in an apprenticeship program and a better fit is required to increase those numbers.

"The old system was obviously seriously flawed and so inflexible that it made industry training unattractive to the young people business and industry needs," Hochstein said. "The new system will help increase the number of skilled workers, the quality of their training and their prospects of finding jobs."

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For more information, please contact:

Philip Hochstein
Chair, Coalition of BC Businesses
Phone: (604) 298-7795
Cell: (604) 880-7700