



## Summary – Policy Endeavours Pertinent to the Agriculture/Farm Sector

- The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce (SCC) partnered with the Conference Board of Canada to create a report entitled “The Impact of Rail Access on Saskatchewan’s Export Potential” which examines the **issue of how restricted rail capacity is hampering the province’s ability to export grain, oil, potash, and other products** to international markets. The report also contains a variety of recommendations to fix the issues, but the provincial and federal government have not yet moved forward on implementing all of those suggestions.
- The SCC recently created a Water Advisory Council that will study (or encourage the provincial government to dedicate more resources toward studying) the **availability and quality of water in Saskatchewan**. This includes looking at areas (mostly rural) that are often flooded and finding ways to reduce the likelihood of future flooding, but also looking at what can be done to effectively irrigate land that does not have enough water for crop production and other agricultural activities.
- Similar to remote northern Saskatchewan, many rural parts of the province are quite underserved in regard to the availability of high speed internet. The SCC has consistently said that to function as a connected 21<sup>st</sup> century economy, there needs to be **fast and reliable internet in all parts of the province**.
- The SCC has advocated for changes to Section 84.1 of the federal Income Tax Act that would **allow farm families to sell their assets** (land, equipment, etc.) to family members (usually a son or daughter) without being unfairly taxed during that transaction. It is currently more profitable to sell those assets to someone that is not a family member, which makes it less likely that the operation of a farm will be continued by children or another close relative.
- The SCC has advocated pension plans based in Canada should be **allowed to purchase Saskatchewan farmland for inclusion within their investment portfolios**. This is a more contentious issue because for young people wanting to get into farming, they would prefer that the price of farmland remain low, but people retiring from farming would clearly like the price to be as high as possible. The chamber has said that a line needs to be drawn against foreign sovereign wealth funds purchasing farmland in the province, but that the Canada Pension Plan and other Canadian pension plans should be allowed to do so.
- For many years, the SCC has **advocated for the subjects of “financial literacy” and “youth entrepreneurship”** to be included as mandatory classes within Saskatchewan’s K-12 curriculum. There is broad support from nearly all our members regarding the importance of teaching young people about both of these things, including from our rural and agriculture-based members.
- For numerous years, the **Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan has participated in all the SCC’s Expert Policy Committees** (Environment, Finance, Human Resources, Investment & Growth, Youth, Education, and Training) and has raised the chamber’s level of knowledge about issues affecting the province’s agricultural sector. This has been a productive partnership and they will likely continue to participate in the work of those Committees, as well as attend many of the SCC’s various advocacy events throughout the year.

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