



\$16 Billion Ontario Tourism Gap Requires a Dedicated Government Strategy: Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce

Lost Revenue From The Province's Tourism Industry Impacting Job Creation and Growth

Chatham-Kent, ON, November 17, 2016: Today, the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC), has released new data that reveals a significant tourism opportunity gap when compared to international growth rates. According to the organization's report, *Closing the Tourism Gap: Creating a Long-Term Advantage for Ontario*, Ontario has foregone nearly \$16 billion in visitor spending between 2006 and 2012 by not keeping up with global growth trends. While this year has been a strong year for tourism in Ontario, it is important that this recent growth is translated into long-term, sustainable gains in tourism visitation.

"The tourism industry is an important economic driver in Chatham-Kent, as well as in many other communities across the province." said Gail Hundt, President & CEO of the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce, "Through research outlined in this report, we've found that Ontario is missing out on significant tourism growth in comparison to international trends. Our local industry is taking great strides in developing initiatives to increase tourism to this area. In conjunction with that, however, the province, as a whole, must take steps to boost our provincial reputation as a global destination for foreign visitors and close the tourism gap."

The Chatham-Kent Chamber's report identifies a number of challenges faced by tourism operators and the broader tourism community in Ontario, while presenting a series of action items to address them. The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce is encouraged that the government is moving ahead with an action plan for the province's tourism industry, a key consideration highlighted by its membership.

The Chamber's report is clear about the need for any provincial strategy to include measurable targets, a practice currently employed by many successful tourism destinations. These targets would help to organize and coordinate tourism activities amongst the diverse group of public and private tourism organizations in Ontario, another key recommendation of the report.

"Ontario's tourism sector needs a dedicated strategy driven by the provincial government that, not only promotes tourism within Ontario, but also focuses on drawing in visitors from around the world," said Allan O'Dette, President and CEO of the OCC. "If we can do this successfully, the province will achieve substantial economic gains while keeping up with global growth trends."

To produce this report, the OCC convened a group of Ontario's leading thinkers within the tourism community. The report builds on previous initiatives undertaken by members of the tourism industry and further substantiates the need for a focused and measured approach targeted towards supporting the future of tourism in Ontario.

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Learn more about Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce.

[Learn more](#) about the OCC.

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