

VOICE OF BUSINESS

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GET CONNECTED IN 2026!

Upcoming Event Calendar

Annual Meeting of Members



Tuesday, February 10th, 2026 at 12 Noon
Location: Balych Mural Meeting Room
Battlefords & District Chamber of Commerce Building

Call for Tickets: 306-445-6226 (lunch provided)



Guest Speaker: Michele Rogers
For Tickets: Call: 306-445-6226, or
email @ admin@battlefordschamber.com



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This approach to regulation creates uncertainty, slows down operations, increases costs, and limits product availability. Even minor discrepancies can put significant demands on time and investment. To make matters worse, as builders adjust their processes to suit whatever province and municipality they're in, another update to building codes may well be announced.

In Canada, National Model Codes operate in five-year update cycles. Yet, in practice, they are subject to a barrage of post-publication revisions and errata packages—both ways to make minor off-cycle adjustments to the code. Since 2005, Canada's building, fire, plumbing, and energy codes have

undergone multiple editions and revisions. Rather than four scheduled updates over 20 years, there have been nine major revisions, including a staggering roughly 3,500 technical changes throughout almost 10,000 pages of code updates and revisions.

Provincial and territorial governments implement and modify these model codes at their own pace, meaning one jurisdiction might adopt a new iteration while another is still operating under an older version. The volume, frequency, and scattered nature of these changes forces builders to constantly review their projects to ensure compliance.

This regulatory environment results in builders shouldering significant administrative burden; companies are preoccupied with tracking and responding to code changes rather than focusing on scaling production and delivering the housing Canadians desperately need. Business confidence also takes

a hit as a lack of regulatory certainty means risk for industry stakeholders working with long planning and investment horizons, which in turn discourages investment. When capital pulls back, housing delivery slows.

Canada's residential construction sector can't solve the housing crisis with innovative new technologies like modular housing while operating in a fragmented, constantly shifting regulatory environment. It's time to stop the rule changing roller-coaster and give builders the certainty they need. Consistent nationwide standards that follow a predictable, regular schedule for updates will allow the residential construction sector to innovate and scale with confidence and finally build the affordable houses hopeful home buyers are waiting for.

2026 Is the Year All the Stars Have to Align

By: Candace Laing, President and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce

2026 has brought with it a rare alignment of the stars. Government, business and labour leaders across Canada agree on what our country needs economically — and more unbelievably, so does public opinion.

An Ipsos poll in December found that three-quarters of Canadians support building new pipelines to ports in British Columbia and Eastern Canada to diversify export markets. A similar 71% said Canada's approval processes for large projects take too long and need reform. In Quebec, 67% of Canadians backed the Marinest LNG project to export natural gas to Europe.

This alignment matters because, for years, Canada's economic framework — the rules, incentives, and signals embedded in public policy — has been pulling investment and talent in a different direction. That framework is no longer fit for purpose. It has created friction rather than momentum, uncertainty rather than confidence, and hesitation rather than openness. The challenge now is whether we can pivot quickly enough to meet the moment. So, will we follow the stars or let this opportunity slip away?

The fall federal budget laid some promising groundwork, detailing practical steps to support Canada's competitiveness and long-term growth, including improving infrastructure, strengthening trade capacity, and investing in strategic sectors that drive jobs, like defence, steel, forestry and trade diversification infrastructure. These budgetary policy decisions matter to the mood of investors and businesses who have been sidelined or spooked since disruption musings began in late 2024.

But favourable conditions alone don't guarantee results — unless paired with smart public policy.

On paper, the economy is growing. Real-time analysis from our Business Data Lab's GDP now casting tool shows Canada growing between 2–3% in Q1. In practice, that growth is uneven. Large firms with scale and capital buffers are better positioned to adapt, while small and medium-sized businesses remain cautious, delaying hiring and investment as costs stay high and demand uncertain. Those businesses are not changing their trade patterns quickly, hoping this will all blow over. In communities where economic opportunity depends on a limited number of employers, that hesitation shows up as layoffs, pay freezes, and stalled community growth.

Capital moves fast globally, and other jurisdictions are working aggressively to attract it. Canadian businesses can't afford to hesitate. Without the economic momentum to restore consumer and business confidence, the gap between us and peer countries will only grow.

For decades, our economy has sent clear signals about where to apply smart policy. Reducing red tape and reviewing our tax competitiveness to encourage investment and innovation. Better trade and transportation infrastructure to assist Canadian producers in efficiently reaching global markets. Aligning immigration, skills training, and regional workforce strategies to help employers fill critical gaps that domestic talent won't.

When companies grow, they hire more workers, pay better, and invest in their communities, which supports families and local services and builds stronger neighbourhoods. Business success is meaningful only if it improves lives.

Addressing these signals determine whether Canada will deliver steady growth, good jobs, and economic optimism at a time when many feel stretched. Economic prosperity and community well-being go hand in hand, and public policy that strengthens one and not the other misses the mark.

The unifying cause we see today across governments, sectors, and communities is a chance for Canada to shore up an economy that has all the ingredients for success, but Parliament still has yet to follow key aspects of the recipe. We cannot again let political gamesmanship on any side of the aisle get in the way of the urgent task at hand. Voters are smart and they will not reward obstinacy in a crisis.

The business community isn't going to sit idle during this process and will push governments by proposing tangible strategies that are economically driven, rather than public sector-directed like the current policy trajectory. We recognize there's reasonable interventions to be made, but we cannot let public policy become a matter of picking winners and losers again.

Moments like the one 2026 is presenting us are easy to miss and hard to recreate. Looking ahead at the fiscal cycle, there are clear opportunities for implementing that smart public policy I mentioned. The next and most obvious is the newly timed federal Spring Economic Statement. Government should remember that business leaders and Canadians have only so much patience and are expecting tangible plans with clear and measurable deliverables.

We cannot afford to lose the sense of urgency that helped galvanize public sentiment in 2025. As Parliament returns, our politicians should remind themselves of that.

Building Codes Are Undermining the Promise of Modular Housing

By: Olha Sotska, Policy Advisor, Canadian Chamber of Commerce

Hopeful Canadian homebuyers waiting for housing affordability to make a comeback will continue to have their optimism and stamina tested as the likelihood of closing Canada's housing gap further deteriorates. To restore affordability to pre-pandemic levels, we need to double the pace of housing starts and reach 430,000 to 480,000 per year, which would completely buck the trend of consistent decline since September 2025.

The numbers are grim, which is why many in the residential construction sector are hedging their bets on the promise of innovative methods. From modular homes produced in factories and assembled on site to cutting-edge 3D printing, several new approaches have emerged to help build safe, affordable, and comfortable homes up to 30- to 50-per-cent faster than traditional construction times. The next step should be as obvious as scaling these approaches, and yet the path forward isn't that simple.

To build a modular house, a company must apply for a building permit from the municipality, a process requiring them to demonstrate that the project meets the technical requirements of the building code as well as other "applicable laws," such as a municipal bylaw. If their project does not meet these requirements, the permit is not granted and no shovels go in the ground.

It's even worse for a builder operating a single facility but aspiring to serve customers nationwide as they are forced to untangle a mess of different provincial, territorial, and municipal code interpretations. While the National Building Code of Canada and compliance standards provide a core trajectory, provinces and territories also enact their own building codes with unique requirements. A modular building unit approved in one province may face different criteria in another, requiring a redesign, re-testing, and additional documentation. Layer municipal bylaws on top of provincial and territorial codes and the modular industry, as well as the wider residential construction industry, ends up navigating a maze of dozens of overlapping and sometimes contradictory regulations.

