



****POLICY DEVELOPMENT GUIDE****

HOW DO I KNOW AN ISSUE IS SUITABLE FOR THE BC CHAMBER?

The British Columbia Chamber of Commerce relies on member Chambers throughout the province to supply well researched policy resolutions for debate at the Annual General Meeting. In order to ensure that the BC Chamber can focus its efforts in the most effective manner all potential policy issues will be assessed against the following criteria, as laid out in the BC Chamber bylaws:

1. Resolutions must be provincial or national in character (in short is the issue a subject that affects all, or a significant number of, businesses throughout British Columbia?)
2. Resolutions must be general in application to the economic public welfare.
3. Resolutions must address a timely, current problem that requires action now
4. Resolutions must be properly researched and include background material that is factual, detailed and complete?

If the issue meets these criteria then this is an issue which should form the basis of a policy resolution to be submitted to the BC Chamber of Commerce.

WHAT SHOULD A PROPOSED RESOLUTION LOOK LIKE?

Each resolution that is adopted by the BC Chamber is published in the BC Chamber Policy and Positions Manual, it is therefore important that all resolutions follow several simple guidelines to ensure consistency.

Each resolution should begin with an appropriate title, followed by an opening statement that states what issue the resolution is addressing. There should then be a description that details the problem including relevant facts and figures. There should then be a recommendation, or series of recommendations, on how the problem could be solved.

These simple guidelines ensure that the Policy and Positions Manual is consistent in style and layout but more importantly it also ensures 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. This will allow the audience, be they a Minister, MLA, media or a member of the public to fully understand the issue and the chambers recommendations.

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; is the resolution

properly researched and is the background material factual, detailed and complete? Does the resolution provide you with an understanding of the issue and provide clear, concise recommendations on how government should address this issue?

Too many resolutions that are submitted lack the proper background. Just because a Chamber believes an issue is important does not make it a resolution. There needs to be some facts and evidence to back up the recommendation. It must provide enough substance for informed debate. This is not work the BC Chamber has the resources to undertake on every issue. Although the Chamber can assist and advise, the work itself must be done at the local level. Resolutions should follow the example below;

<title>

NEW ALPINE FOOTWEAR IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

<statement of problem>

One of the most serious issues facing our school system today is the latest fashion predilection of teens to wear orange Nordica or yellow Hansen Alpine Ski Boots for everyday wear.

<details of the problem>

This latest fashion fad creates problems for several reasons. Firstly, the virulent orange and yellow colours are not just figuratively an eyesore, but have resulted in six WCB claims on the part of teaching staff. This is an added expense our school system does not need at this time. The safety issue is compounded because the students wearing these items are not able to walk with any sense of stability and furthermore the great weight of the boots can do serious damage to the feet of those few students who are not similarly equipped. To our knowledge eight students have been injured to date.

A second issue is the disruption this footwear causes as students perambulate the halls. The noise is constant. Even just one student making a visit to the washroom can disrupt almost every class in the school.

A third issue is that of damage. The previously mentioned weight and clumsiness of this latest fashion accessory has caused great damage to floors, walls, windows, doors and in one extraordinary (and rather embarrassing) case to the art teacher's loose, Kaftan style garment. The total damage to date in schools across British Columbia is over \$622,000.

The final issue revolves around gangs. The yellow Hansen and orange Nordica factions have, to our knowledge, been involved in three separate altercations. Apparently debating the attributes of each other's footwear.

<recommendation>

THE CHAMBER RECOMMENDS

That the provincial government immediately ban the wearing of any kind of Alpine Skiing footwear in the schools of the province of British Columbia.

Submitted by the Chamber of Commerce

WHAT HAPPENS TO A RESOLUTION AFTER IT IS SUBMITTED?

As each resolution arrives, it will be reviewed by the appropriate Policy Advisory Committee. This committee will then provide input and recommendations to the BC Chamber Policy Review Committee. The committee will use its expertise to review each policy resolution to ensure that it meets the criteria as laid out above and that 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.

It is important to note here that the Policy Review Committee 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.

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 submitting chamber.

It must be noted here that this process is a member driven process, designed to ensure that resolutions that are passed at the AGM provide a well reasoned, strong platform for the BC Chamber to take to the appropriate level of government. The recommendation of the policy review committee is just that, a recommendation. As long as the policy resolution meets the eligibility criteria it WILL be submitted to the policy session of the AGM and the submitting chamber will be provided the opportunity to defend the resolution at the policy session.

Proposed resolutions which meet the eligibility criteria are printed in the Proposed Resolutions Manual. This book is sent to all Members at least 30 days before the Annual General Meeting. Each member is strongly encouraged to study the items and determine the position it will take on each during the policy session.

WE MISSED THE DEADLINE, CAN WE STILL SUBMIT?

The BC Chamber makes every effort to ensure that this process is as open and as inclusive as possible for our members, a key part of this is the importance of the deadline for resolution submissions. For resolutions to be reviewed by the Policy Review Committee, and therefore to be included in the Proposed Resolutions Manual they must be received by February 23, 2009. Having said this we do understand that there will be situations where member chambers are unable to submit resolutions by the official closing date. Resolutions that are not received by this date will be dealt with as Late Resolutions.

In this instance submitting chambers will be asked to submit a letter outlining the reasons why the resolution was not able to be submitted before the closing date. This letter, along with the resolution, will then be reviewed by a committee consisting of the Chair of the Board, the Chair of the Policy Review Committee and the President and CEO of the BC Chamber. **The resolution will only go forward for consideration by delegates at the AGM if there is a valid reason for its late submission.**

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, meaning that any policy dated 2006 or before is due to expire at this years AGM. Having said this within its three year lifespan resolutions may also be revoked, amended or recommended for deletion, subject to approval by delegates to the AGM.

With this in mind we would also urge chambers to review the policy resolutions currently in the manual to ensure they accurately reflect the current situation and the recommendations of your members. If they don't - you have the power to ensure they do.

To amend current policy member chambers must submit the amendments by the same date they submit new policy resolutions; February 23, 2009. In order to ensure that delegates are able to easily understand proposed changes amended policy should adhere to the following format:

Any recommended addition to a current policy must show the changes as underlined typeface track changes.

Any recommended deletions from current policy must show the changes as ~~strikeout typeface~~ track changes

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

Member chambers, the Policy Review Committee or a BC Chamber task force all have the ability to recommend that policy which is due to expire can be recommended for retention. To do this chambers simply need to provide a recommendation, **along with a rationale as to why the policy should be extended** and as long as this recommendation is approved by delegates at the AGM this policy will automatically become policy for a further year.

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.