

Chambre de Commerce du Pontiac
Pontiac Chamber of Commerce
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October 29, 2008

Mme. Charlotte L'Ecuyer,

On behalf of the residents of the Pontiac I am writing this letter with the hope of getting your attention and support in the very serious matter of our local economic health.

The Pontiac Chamber of Commerce has been working closely with the local businesses and fuel suppliers to determine the statistics relating to the volume of gas sold over the past few years and the decrease of retail sales in Pontiac.

With the help of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Pontiac Chamber of Commerce has concluded that the Pontiac is losing sales in huge numbers (millions actually) due mainly to the availability of cheap gas (approximately 12 cents cheaper) within a 10 minute drive of our area – just across the border in Ontario. It has also been recognized that in the past 15 years more than 15 gas stations have closed in the Pontiac.

Also of note is that on any given day, 20% of the vehicles sitting in parking lots at Renfrew and Pembroke, Ontario retailers are licensed with Quebec plates. It is, of course, an unattainable figure to determine how many retailers in the Ottawa/Carleton region lure customers from the Pontiac directly.

As a concerned Chamber of Commerce we hereby request that the following actions be taken.

- 1) The Minister of Revenue designate the Pontiac region (along the Ottawa River north 40 km) a "border region" as per the Fuel Tax Act, R.S.Q. c. T-1 (copy attached).
- 2) The Minister of Revenue reduces the fuel tax by 8 cents in the Pontiac as has been done in the past with other border towns.

A timely response on your part is both imperative and appreciated as we are currently in the midst of some very rough economic times in our region and we believe that in order to stop the exodus of our residents into Ontario to spend their money, having reasonable and competitive gas prices will encourage them to "shop at home" more often.

Most Sincerely,

Tom Orr
Board Member on behalf of the
Fuel Tax Sub-committee
Pontiac Chamber of Commerce

sent via electronic submission
paper copy to follow