



# 2017 Policy Paper

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An overview of the NSBA and its key policies  
and position statements

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This document contains the basic policies and positions of the NSBA. It is not all-encompassing, but rather, provides a snapshot of what the NSBA is about and what it stands for. It is a living document in that it is reviewed by the NSBA Board of Directors on an annual basis. Approved by the Board of Directors March 17, 2017.

# **NSBA Policy Paper**

**March 2017**

## **Preface**

- The NSBA advocates and lobbies on behalf of its members to further their common interest of creating a more business friendly environment.
- The NSBA activism is rooted in the history of the organization and differentiates it from other business organizations.
- The NSBA is known for a sensible approach to problem-solving, speaking up when the occasion warrants, and getting things done.
- The NSBA's strategic approach means lobbying efforts can be proactive and sustained for years while membership advocacy can be more reactive to present or anticipated conditions.
- The NSBA effectively enhances its credibility and influence by meeting with business leaders and demonstrating its value and gaining their trust.
- Lobbying is often a complex and long-term process. Resulting strong relationships aim to serve as catalysts for change.

## **The NSBA is known for the following:**

- Loyalty to its members. The NSBA is focused on its members' interests as it works with governments, regardless of their political stripe, and other organizations.
- Getting things done. The NSBA has demonstrated its effectiveness of saying the right thing and then doing it.
- Opinion leader. The NSBA's reputation means that our involvement and leadership is regularly sought.
- Voice of Business. The NSBA has become the voice of the owner managed business community.
- Premiere Business events. The NSBA is recognized as the market leader in business event programming.
- Strength in community. The NSBA's members become stronger through their participation in and association with the NSBA community.

## The current top five initiatives for the organization include:

- **Government Procurement:** Increased focus on the development of Priority Saskatchewan, ensuring government is upholding the principles of free trade and Saskatchewan businesses are being treated fairly in government procurement.
- **Energy & Resources:** Support for the Saskatchewan Government's opposition to a federally-mandated carbon tax that would have negative implications on the economy of Saskatchewan. We support policy, legislation, and industrial activity regarding energy & resources that have a positive economic impact on the province.
- **WCB Funding Policy:** Supporting modernization of the WCB's Funding Policy resulting in consistent and transparent processes for collecting and refunding premiums from employers. We support changes to the organization's governance and appeals processes as necessary to support this initiative.
- **Infrastructure (Yellowhead Northern Gateway):** The development of the perimeter highway and north river crossing around Saskatoon.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Civic and provincial budget reviews to ensure that government spending is in the best interests of businesses and taxpayers, including monitoring for accountability purposes. Key to this initiative is our annual pre-budget civic taxation review.

## Key Policy Positions

### Blanket statements:

The NSBA:

- supports and protects business;
- supports free trade that is fair and on a level playing ground;
- believes businesses' primary function is wealth creation;
- encourages business relationships built on mutual trust, respect, integrity and value;
- is aware of, and supports when appropriate, the greater good of the community at large.

### Government Relations Policy:

- We believe government's primary function is to govern; to provide the basic necessities.
- We believe government's role is to regulate businesses as opposed to operating businesses that could otherwise be served by private sector interests.

- We believe government's role is to create economic conditions for business to prosper.
- We encourage governments to have an eye towards expense reduction; we support lean initiatives.
- We believe in small, lean governments, with competitive tax policy.
- We believe competitive tax policy provides a competitive advantage for Saskatoon and the province of Saskatchewan to grow and prosper.
- We support paying our fair share of taxes, particularly when we perceive there to be a good return on investment.
- To that end, we believe the non-residential property tax ratio should be 1.43:1, as opposed to its current ratio of 1.75:1.
- We support P3 initiatives, when they make good economic sense.
- We support the principles behind Priority Saskatchewan.

### **Economic Development Policy**

- We support government involvement as long as the programs and services assist in economic development; such taxpayer-funded initiatives must be truly advantageous to build the economy and demonstrate a return on the investment.
  - Such involvement can take place in a number of areas, such as:
    - Aboriginal economic development
    - Business retention/attraction
    - Education/Workforce training
    - Exports
    - Technology transfer
- We support the development of commodity transportation infrastructure, particularly those that have long-term benefits to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and Canada.
- We therefore support Energy East, Keystone XL Pipeline and similar pipeline development.
- We believe business development must respect environmental standards; however, government environmental policies must also take into consideration economic implications and market reality.

### **Labour Relations Policy**

- We strongly support a safe workplace for all employees and employers.
- We support Mission Zero initiatives.

- We support the modernization of Saskatchewan's Employment Act.
- We support the indexation of Minimum Wage.
- We support the expansion of immigration into Saskatchewan.
- We encourage the efforts of the Worker's Compensation Board to reform its organizational policy and culture.
- We believe WCB should refund its excess revenue to its rightful owners, the businesses of Saskatchewan, and take steps to mitigate instances of excess revenue now and in the future.
- We believe it's government's responsibility to negotiate and collectively bargain with its employees in a fair and equitable manner, with the taxpaying stakeholders being fairly represented.
- We oppose defined benefits for any government employees' pensions.
- Labour Standards, OHS and Labour Relations Boards all serve distinct needs but they all must improve in recognizing the interests of businesses.

### **Taxation Policy**

- We believe that due to the tax premiums businesses pay, whether through payroll taxes, (WCB, Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, etc.), income taxes, non-residential property tax premiums, property assessment etc. that businesses' opinions and perspectives should be similarly weighted, and therefore, be given primary consideration.
- The NSBA supports balanced budget initiatives by all levels of government.
- We believe it is the expenditures side of the ledger that should be the first area of review for balancing books.
- We believe competitive taxes create more opportunity, and hence economic stability, for all.
- We can support tax increases provided there are valid reasons for doing so.