



FUELING MOMENTUM 2024

PROVINCIAL ELECTION PLATFORM



Released on:

June 13, 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS



- 01 MESSAGE FROM THE CEO**
- 03 OBJECTIVES**
- 03 PROPOSALS**
 - Competitive Taxes and Affordable Living
 - Food, Fuel, Fertilizer (and Other Critical Minerals)
 - Attract & Grow Investment
 - Invest in a Better Tomorrow
 - Invest in What Matters
- 05 LAY THE FOUNDATIONS FOR GROWTH: COMPETITIVE TAXES AND AFFORDABLE LIVING**
 - Proposals
 - Fueling Momentum
- 06 LEVERAGE OUR STRENGTHS: FOOD, FUEL, FERTILIZER, AND CRITICAL MINERALS**
 - Food
 - Fuel
 - Food, Fuel, Fertilizer (and Other Critical Minerals)
 - Proposals
- 09 ATTRACT AND GROW INVESTMENT**
 - Supporting Saskatchewan Small Business Growth
 - Contracts & Procurement
 - Proposals
- 11 INVEST IN A BETTER TOMORROW**
 - Energy Transformation
 - 25 Years to 2050: Embracing Nuclear Energy
 - Proposals
- 13 INVEST IN WHAT MATTERS**
 - Core Priorities
 - Workforce
 - Pathways For Increasing Indigenous Opportunities
 - Retaining Skilled Professionals
 - Infrastructure
- 15 CONCLUSION**



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Saskatchewan has experienced a transformative shift. Meticulous planning by successive provincial administrations, businesses, and community leaders has created a foundation on which we can fuel Saskatchewan's next decade of growth. Creating the regulatory and fiscal conditions to encourage growth and new investment has been pivotal in steering this change.

Our economic expansion and increased population have yielded many benefits for our province, including increased employment opportunities, improved services, and enhanced financial capacity.

Saskatchewan's evolution is in its early stages, and a series of missed opportunities could derail our momentum. While Saskatchewan's position and potential remain strong, the broader Canadian economy suffers from declining productivity, continued inflationary pressures, and affordability issues.^{iv}

Capitalizing on Saskatchewan's vast potential will be crucial to fueling Saskatchewan's continued growth. Saskatchewan's economy is built on the backs of highly productive sectors like energy, mining, agriculture, and manufacturing. Expanding these sectors and growing our economy can catalyze Canada's anemic productivity.

Increasing investment will be essential to fully realize the opportunities available in Saskatchewan. Businesses make investments to grow when they are confident in long-term success. Unfortunately, right now, business confidence in Saskatchewan is concerning.

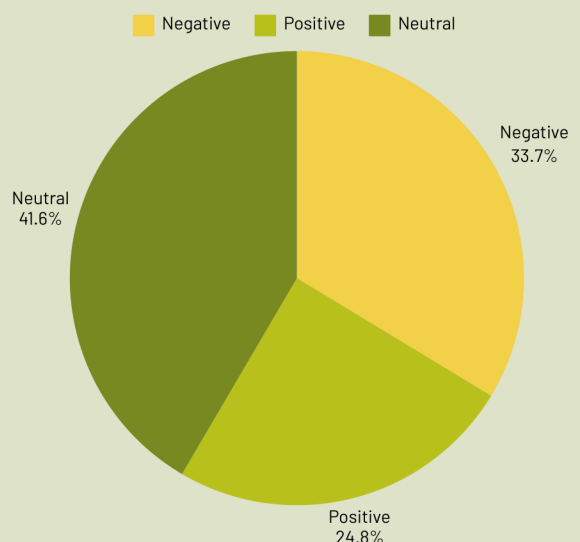
With the right policies, we can increase business confidence in Saskatchewan and generate the investment necessary to reach our ambitions.

Good ideas cross political party lines and are supported by a broad swath of the public. From our diverse membership, we have built a library of good ideas and recommendations for actionable implementation.

The Chamber developed these policies through consultations with Saskatchewan's industry leaders and our members. Our positions could and should be incorporated into the platforms of all political parties, which is why we have undertaken the effort to present them through *Fueling Momentum 2024*.

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE SENTIMENT

How confident are you in your business' success over the next 5 years?



Fueling Momentum 2024 was developed to highlight the most pressing provincial government-controlled issues facing our local business community. Saskatchewan has many opportunities, but we also have issues we must address to keep the province moving forward.

Fueling Momentum 2024 is based on five pillars foundational to Saskatchewan's growth.

1. Laying the **foundations for growth** with competitive taxes and a focus on affordable living.
2. Leveraging our strengths in **food, fuel, fertilizer, and critical minerals**.
3. **Attracting and growing investment** for our small and local businesses.
4. Investing in a better tomorrow through **green energy and Indigenous partnerships**.
5. Investing in what matters – **our infrastructure** and our **provincial workforce**.

It is our hope that by raising the profile of these pillars and the changes needed to ensure their strength and success, we will encourage faster adoption of the solutions and policies necessary to continue fueling our next decade of growth.

Our proposals include reducing taxes to alleviate Saskatchewan's crushing affordability pressures and increasing investments in priority areas like healthcare, education, and social services.

We recognize that reducing taxes and increasing investment may seem inconsistent to some. However, the Chamber strongly believes that the increased economic activity resulting from the proposals throughout *Fuelling Momentum 2024* will grow our economy and increase investment in Saskatchewan. The benefits from this growth over the long term will far outweigh any short-term impacts.

By implementing the recommendations in this platform, we know Saskatchewan can become a better place to live, work, and invest. We also know these issues are not exclusive to us. As a reader of *Fueling Momentum 2024*, we urge you to use this work for your 2024 election advocacy.

Whether you're talking to the candidates in your riding or sharing all or parts of this platform with your contacts, we believe better engagement makes better policy. We look forward to your support in expanding the discussion.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Prabha Ramaswamy".

Prabha Ramaswamy

CEO, Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce



1. OBJECTIVES

- Reinforce the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce's position as the most influential advocate for Saskatchewan's business community.
- Ensure the priorities of the Chamber's membership are reflected in the platforms of Saskatchewan's leading political parties.



2. PROPOSALS

2.1 Competitive Taxes and Affordable Living

- Reduce the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) from 6% to 5%.
- Reduce the corporate income tax rate to 10%. Alberta remains Saskatchewan's strongest competitor in attracting job-creating investments. Saskatchewan's corporate tax rate is 50% higher than Alberta's (12% vs. 8%). A reduction would increase our competitiveness, help expand our economy, and generate additional government revenues throughout the long term.^{i,ii}

2.2 Food, Fuel, Fertilizer (and Other Critical Minerals)

- Maintain a stable regulatory and royalty regime encouraging development and increased investment in Saskatchewan.
- Continue diversifying export markets for Saskatchewan's mining products by exploring new trading partners and reducing reliance on traditional markets.
- Commit to implementing a strategy to ensure equity among the property classes to increase competitiveness and economic growth.

- Combine the resource class with the existing commercial/industrial class for Education Property Taxes and retain the latter's lower mill rate of 6.86. Ensure sustainable funding for investment in education that reduces the reliance on education property tax revenues.
- Commit to reviewing and if necessary, enhancing Saskatchewan's value-added agriculture incentive programs to ensure they remain competitive with competing jurisdictions throughout North America.

2.3 Attract and Grow Investment

- Increase Saskatchewan's red tape reduction savings target to \$20 - \$40 million annually.
- Create a government procurement policy that creates right-size opportunities for Saskatchewan companies, while respecting existing trade agreements. Rather than tendering large projects in their entirety, elements of projects can be tendered in smaller pieces to create greater opportunities for smaller Saskatchewan companies to get involved.
- Implement a business incentive for small and medium-sized businesses based on the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce's 50/50/50 proposal.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Carry out a thorough analysis of the local vendor supply chain to assess the current and future status of local supplier capacity and anticipated local demands, identify where local vendors may not have the capacity to meet expectations, and develop plans to address those identified gaps and incorporate this data into subsequent decision-making including investments in infrastructure.
- Launch an enhanced "shop local" campaign in consultation with industry, expanding its reach and impact through a comprehensive, province-wide marketing strategy.

2.4 Invest In A Better Tomorrow

- Increase support for research and development of small modular reactor (SMR) technologies.
- Create the space to facilitate direct partnerships between private energy generators, including Indigenous-owned power generators, and businesses that do not require Crown involvement.
- Move Demand Side Management programs into an independent, third-party entity, employing a delegated authority model to reduce financial conflict while offering clarity and specialized support.

2.5 Invest In What Matters

WORKFORCE

- Ensure the resources are available to support the timely processing of an expanding number of Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) applications.
- Find a balance between protecting youth and encouraging early labor force engagement. The SCC recommends lowering the age of youth able to work to 13 years old or above and applying age-appropriate changes to the Young Workers Readiness Certificate Course.

PATHWAYS FOR INCREASING INDIGENOUS OPPORTUNITIES

- Implement and expand upon initiatives tailored to the specific needs of Indigenous peoples to address skill gaps and facilitate access to training.
- Create and promote support mechanisms to encourage establishing and growing Indigenous-owned businesses and enterprises.
- Continue to emphasize Indigenous Awareness Training for government employees.

RETAINING SKILLED PROFESSIONALS

- Create additional incentives for high-demand industries.
- Develop a strategy to retain young professionals and skilled newcomers to Saskatchewan, that includes setting a provincial retention target.^{iv}

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Prioritize improvements to transportation infrastructure to facilitate the transportation of Saskatchewan products to market.
- Work with provincial partners to advocate for improvements to essential infrastructure like the expansion of ports and increasing railway capacity.
- Create the space to expand partnerships between SaskTel and private sector suppliers to increase connectivity for households and SMEs outside major urban centers.
- Establish an Industry Collaboration Table based on the recommendation of the Saskatchewan Broadband Action Committee.



3. LAY THE FOUNDATIONS FOR GROWTH: COMPETITIVE TAXES AND AFFORDABLE LIVING

The rising cost of living and inflationary pressures are top-of-mind for many throughout Saskatchewan. Our province's business community shares this concern. The combined burden of federal, provincial, and local taxes (and additional operating costs) comprises 4 of the top 5 issues affecting Saskatchewan's business community today.

A stable, competitive, and attractive fiscal environment allows businesses to entice the capital necessary to confidently invest in their future goals and generate good, mortgage-paying jobs for Saskatchewan's next decade of growth. Reforming the complexity of Saskatchewan's taxation framework and reducing the overall fiscal and regulatory burden on Saskatchewan businesses and its people will leverage even greater economic gains into the future. Sustained economic growth is essential as it allows the provincial government the opportunity to invest in the critical services that matter most.

We recognize that reducing taxes will potentially impact government revenues over the short term. However, the increased economic expansion resulting from a more competitive and attractive investment environment in Saskatchewan will provide substantially more benefits for the province's economy and revenues over the medium and long term.

3.1 Proposals

- Reduce the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) from 6% to 5%.
- Reduce the corporate income tax rate to 10%. Alberta remains Saskatchewan's strongest competitor in attracting job-creating investments. Saskatchewan's corporate tax rate is 50% higher than Alberta's (12% vs. 8%). A reduction would increase our competitiveness, help expand

our economy, and generate additional government revenues throughout the long term.^{v, vi}

FUELING MOMENTUM

Saskatchewan's business community was extremely supportive of the Government of Saskatchewan holding the small business tax rate at 1% in the 2024-25 provincial budget and would encourage the next Government of Saskatchewan to maintain this rate in future budgets.

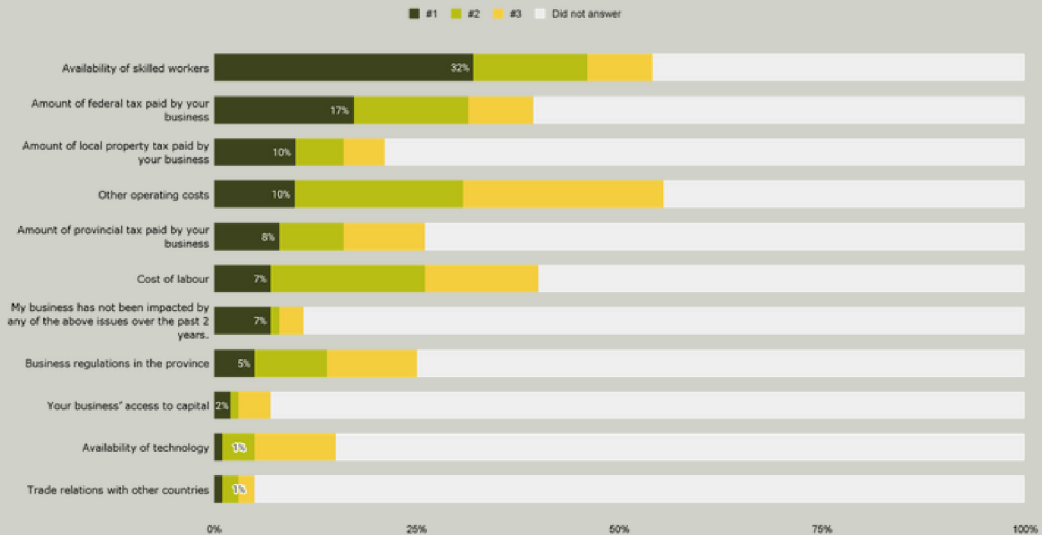
FEDERAL CARBON TAX

The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce has been fiercely advocating for the Federal Government to return the proceeds of Canada's carbon tax to small businesses. In the 2024-25 budget, the Government of Canada earmarked \$2.5 billion in carbon tax collections from Fuel Charge proceeds to be returned to small businesses – the Chamber is encouraged by the announcement of this long-awaited initiative.

However, the Chamber remains adamant in its position the Federal carbon tax should be removed to help alleviate the increasing financial pressures of Canadian small businesses and consumers.

BUSINESS IMPACT ISSUES

Rank the top issues affecting your business in the past two years.



4. LEVERAGE OUR STRENGTHS: FOOD, FUEL, FERTILIZER, AND CRITICAL MINERALS

Saskatchewan isn't just a supplier; it's a symbol of security, reliability, and sustainability. These are strengths we can leverage during a period of generational global instability.

We are privileged to possess abundant natural resources in high demand around the world. With the right policies, Saskatchewan is in an opportune position to supply the world with the sustainably produced natural resources a growing global population will continue demanding for decades into the future.

4.1 Food

The current geopolitical situation risks increasing global food insecurity. During this tumultuous period, Saskatchewan can be a secure and sustainable supplier of food and other value-added agricultural products.

Saskatchewan has a history of punching above our weight on the national and international stage. Increasing our agriculture exports to our allies is just one example of how we can continue displaying our leadership.

Agriculture is a significant driver of economic

growth and job creation in Saskatchewan, accounting for nearly 9% of our GDP in 2022. The sector is also one of the main generators of employment in rural Saskatchewan.

Over the past decade, Saskatchewan has seen remarkable growth in the value-added agriculture sector. The government has worked hard to create the right conditions and correct incentives to generate significant investment throughout the space. Processing the raw commodities we produce before export increases our economic productivity and helps support additional job growth.

As a landlocked province, Saskatchewan's businesses already face significant disadvantages. This is particularly true in our agriculture sector, which relies on Canada's railways and port authorities to ensure it can meet its customers' demands.

Canada's existing trade infrastructure is already operating at maximum capacity, and the many infrastructure and labor pressure points leave little room for disruption without severe impacts on Saskatchewan and the broader Canadian economy.

Working with the provinces and the federal government, the next Government of Saskatchewan should look to lead a national conversation on the importance of upgrading essential trade infrastructure.

VANCOUVER PORT AUTHORITY

The Vancouver-Fraser Port is essential to ensuring Saskatchewan's commodities can get to market. It handles \$22 billion of our province's products each year.^{xii}

Canada's existing trade infrastructure is already operating at maximum capacity, and the many infrastructure and labour pressure points leave little room for disruption without severe impacts on Saskatchewan and the broader Canadian economy.

4.2 Fuel

A stable, dependable, and affordable energy supply is essential to the success of Saskatchewan's businesses, our economy's growth, and our residents' quality of life. This is true for every jurisdiction looking to grow its economy and expand its middle class.

We are fortunate to possess abundant oil, natural gas, uranium, sunlight, and wind. As our population (and the world's) continues to grow, our demand for all forms of energy will increase. Ensuring we are in a position to meet that demand will be integral to supporting Saskatchewan's economic growth.

Saskatchewan is a pioneer in sustainable energy development. Combining carbon capture utilization and storage with enhanced oil recovery (EOR) cuts emissions by 82% when compared to traditional oil and natural gas extraction.

This has already been happening in Weyburn, Saskatchewan for decades. Unfortunately, current federal government incentives for CCUS exclude enhanced oil recovery. The next

Government of Saskatchewan should continue advocating for the inclusion of EOR in CCUS incentives.

Our oil and natural gas resources will continue to be in high demand throughout the international marketplace. Ensuring we have the policies and infrastructure in place necessary to reach these markets must remain a priority of the next provincial government.^{vii}

MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAXES – PERCENTAGE OF VALUE (POV)

Unlike the mill rate, which is determined by municipalities. The Percentage of Value (POV), the percentage of a property's total value that can be subject to taxation, is determined by the provincial government.

Currently, these rates apply to non-arable (range or pasture) land at 45%, cultivated agricultural land at 55%, residential at 80%, and commercial at 85%.

FUELING MOMENTUM

In the 2024-25 budget, the provincial government introduced the Multi-lateral Oil Well Program (MLWP, the MLWP offers an additional volumetric drilling incentive for eligible wells drilled after April 1, 2024, and before March 31, 2028. The Chamber supports the introduction of this incentive and would encourage the next government to maintain the program as well as review the program's success with stakeholders at the midway point (2026).

4.3 Fertilizer (and Other Critical Minerals)

The global push for increased electrification will require substantially more critical minerals and other raw materials to create the batteries, transmission lines, and panels required to meet global demand. A growing

global population will also require more fertilizer to increase yields and produce the food necessary for an increased population. Capitalizing on this opportunity will be essential to fueling Saskatchewan's next period of momentum and growth.

Creating the conditions for the continued growth of established mining industries—uranium and potash—must remain a priority for the next provincial government. These industries are significant economic drivers and must remain competitive in an intense global marketplace. However, we must also look to create the policy and fiscal frameworks required to attract the investment necessary to develop new or expand already existing sectors throughout the critical mineral supply chain.

A strong critical minerals sector contributes to national and regional supply chain security, creates job opportunities, and generates new royalty revenues for governments. In addition to these local benefits, a strong critical minerals sector can help address pressing global challenges, including climate change, technological progress, and food insecurity.

FEDERAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In October 2023, the Supreme Court of Canada found key portions of Canada's Impact Assessment Act to be unconstitutional. In the 2024-25 budget, the Federal Government introduced changes to the regime intended to address these issues.

Saskatchewan will not be able to realize our many economic opportunities if Canada does not have an efficient and credible regulatory regime that encourages quick answers and attracts the investment necessary to reach our goals.

The Chamber strongly encourages the next Government of Saskatchewan to collaborate with provinces to advocate for an efficient regulatory regime.

FUELING MOMENTUM

The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce was encouraged by the various new, extended, and expanded incentives across critical minerals, mines, energy, innovation, and technology that will potentially serve as a catalyst for leveraging Saskatchewan's natural advantages. The Chamber encourages the next government to maintain these incentives to allow time for investment to materialize and not add to an already uncertain Canadian investment environment.

4.4 Proposals

- Maintain a stable regulatory and royalty regime encouraging development and increased investment in Saskatchewan.
- Continue diversifying export markets for Saskatchewan's mining products by exploring new trading partners and reducing reliance on traditional markets.
- Commit to implementing a strategy to ensure equity among the property classes to increase competitiveness and economic growth.
- Combine the resource class with the existing commercial/industrial class for Education Property Taxes and retain the latter's lower mill rate of 6.86. Ensure sustainable funding for investment in education that reduces the reliance on education property tax revenues.
- Commit to reviewing and if necessary, enhancing Saskatchewan's value-added agriculture incentive programs to ensure they remain competitive with competing jurisdictions throughout North America.



5. ATTRACT AND GROW INVESTMENT

The many economic opportunities available to Saskatchewan have yet to reach their full potential as the amount of new capital invested in existing businesses or the creation of new businesses has not fully materialized. If Saskatchewan is to fully realize its economic potential, a large and steady stream of capital investment is required.

RED-TAPE REDUCTION

The Government of Saskatchewan's red-tape reduction committee targets saving Saskatchewan businesses \$10 - \$20 million annually by addressing inefficient regulations that limit competitiveness and economic growth.

A thriving small business sector is necessary to fuel the momentum of any province. According to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the overwhelming majority – 98% – would classify as small businesses. ^{viii}

Business confidence in Saskatchewan is at concerning levels; we need our small businesses to invest in growth and create good mortgage-paying jobs for our residents.

Saskatchewan's next government must prioritize increasing the diversity of our investor mix and facilitating increased access to capital for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

To do this, the government must move at the speed of business and address the inefficiencies and inconsistencies limiting economic growth and industrial development.

For instance, Saskatchewan's current business incentives are almost exclusively focused on our province's largest companies, excluding the majority of SMEs—many of which are vendors and critical to the supply chains of these companies.

Current growth incentives exclude the companies essential to Saskatchewan's supply chains and who create the majority of our province's jobs.

The benefits offered to the province through attracting and growing investment are as diverse as the investment opportunities offered in the province.

Incentives to support investment could help launch more start-up businesses or help existing businesses expand. Creating a positive environment for the re-investment of profits into existing local businesses supports job growth and capacity building; while investor attraction can offer crucial cash flow for changing organizations or help retirees receive the best value for their life's work.

SASKATOON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SME INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT PROPOSAL

In their 2024-25 provincial budget submission, the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce proposed an incentive to help SMEs increase access to capital. The 50/50/50 proposal, like the Saskatchewan Technology Start-Up incentive, would create a Saskatchewan non-refundable tax credit up to 50% for individuals and corporations, eligible businesses must have less than 50 full time employees and a minimum of 50% of employees must reside in the province.

5.1 Supporting Saskatchewan Small Businesses Growth

The Government of Saskatchewan's recent initiative to encourage residents to shop at local businesses through the "Together We Stand" campaign was incredibly successful and very well received by Saskatchewan's small business community. Local businesses are integral to the economic success of Saskatchewan's towns and cities and vital to the social fabric of our communities. Encouraging local consumerism can help sustain these communities and help rejuvenate our provincial economy.

Building on the success of "Together We Stand," the Chamber recommends expanding this campaign further, with additional funding and a broader strategic focus to ensure long-term economic resilience throughout our province.

5.2 Contracts & Procurement

Saskatchewan companies find it difficult to successfully bid on government contracts and procurements. Creating the conditions for Saskatchewan's small and medium-sized enterprises to scale and become more competitive will help our homegrown businesses succeed in this area. Further, additional options should be considered such as breaking up larger projects or bids into smaller pieces so homegrown Saskatchewan companies have better chances of success.

5.3 Proposals

- Increase Saskatchewan's red tape reduction savings target to \$20 - \$40 million annually.
- Create a government procurement policy that creates right-size opportunities for Saskatchewan companies, while respecting existing trade agreements. Rather than tendering large projects in their entirety, elements of projects can be tendered in smaller pieces to create greater

opportunities for smaller Saskatchewan companies to get involved.

- Implement a business incentive for small and medium-sized businesses based on the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce's 50/50/50 proposal. ^{ix}
- Carry out a thorough analysis of the local vendor supply chain to assess the current and future status of local supplier capacity and anticipated local demands, identify where local vendors may not have the capacity to meet expectations, and develop plans to address those identified gaps and incorporate this data into subsequent decision-making including investments in infrastructure.
- Launch an enhanced "shop local" campaign in consultation with industry, expanding its reach and impact through a comprehensive, province-wide marketing strategy.



6. INVEST IN A BETTER TOMORROW

6.1 Energy Transformation

Embracing clean energy technologies and policies to help address climate change is integral to supporting thriving local economies and protecting our environment. Advancing economic growth and environmental protection can – and must – go together. However, these policies must be designed and implemented so they continue to support local business growth and sustain competitive exports within the global market.

Saskatchewan's cultural commitment to continuously improve and our dedication to protecting the natural environment we call home means our province has some of the world's most sustainable practices in producing the resources the world depends on.

This is Saskatchewan's advantage in a world demanding more food and energy, produced more sustainably. Maintaining our reputation as a clean, safe, and reliable participant in the global economy is crucial for attracting high-calibre opportunities to fuel Saskatchewan's momentum.

Saskatchewan's businesses care about the environment in which we operate, and we want to protect it and reduce our emissions. Unfortunately, investing to further our energy transformation can be prohibitively expensive without the right incentives.

Saskatchewan's next government must prioritize increasing opportunities to incentivize green investments, support the expansion of renewable energy sources, and encourage sustainable business practices. The necessity of these practices means various policies and incentives in similar jurisdictions could be reviewed, emulated, and potentially improved upon.

In Saskatchewan specifically, creating the space and helping to facilitate additional partnerships between renewable energy generators in the wind, solar, and geothermal industries will provide the momentum we need to reduce emissions and reach our sustainability targets.

High operating costs, increasing external pressures, and an intensifying global marketplace are already pressing the margins of Saskatchewan's job creators. Ensuring they can implement practices and innovations that reduce emissions and enhance their sustainability will help fuel our economy and reach our most important environmental ambitions.

WATER - OUR MOST IMPORTANT NATURAL RESOURCE

New industrial developments such as mines and value-added agriculture projects currently being considered for Saskatchewan will help fuel the momentum for Saskatchewan's next decade of growth. However, these developments have the potential to significantly impact Saskatchewan's water supply system. Determining the proper utilization of this resource today is essential for the viability of Saskatchewan's enterprises and its residents over the long-term.

6.2 25 Years to 2050: Embracing Nuclear Energy

When Saskatchewan's next provincial government is sworn in, we will be weeks away from saying farewell to 2024 and welcoming in a new year.

2025 will take us 25 years away from 2050 – the pivotal date that defines the finish line of our global net-zero ambitions. Parallel to these goals, a growing global population will continue demanding more access to energy to meet the needs of an expanding middle class.

Every year the world continues to consume more oil, natural gas, and coal to generate the energy essential to its economy. The world has invested trillions of dollars in reducing its reliance on these energy sources. But despite our best efforts, the overall reliance on coal, oil, and natural gas has remained steady.

To reach our lofty – but necessary ambitions – the world must confidently embrace expanding nuclear energy.

Many have already begun this discussion as 2050 draws nearer and our demand for energy grows exponentially. As the conversation picks up and more jurisdictions begin looking into nuclear energy, Saskatchewan, with its established uranium industry and significant support for innovating small modular reactors (SMR), is well-positioned to capitalize on this opportunity.

“We would like to see a quicker implementation of the nuclear program to stimulate our economic growth”

- Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce
Member, 2024 Election Priorities Survey

6.3 Proposals

- Increase support for research and development of small modular reactor (SMR) technologies and shorten the timeline of development.
- Expand incentives for Saskatchewan-based small and medium-sized enterprises to reduce emissions and enhance the sustainability of their operations.
- Create the space to facilitate direct partnerships between private energy generators, including Indigenous-owned power generators, and business that do not require Crown involvement.
- Move Demand Side Management programs into an independent, third-party entity, employing a delegated authority model to reduce financial conflict while offering clarity and specialized support.



7. INVEST IN WHAT MATTERS

7.1 Core Priorities

Saskatchewan's business community is built by of moms, dads, sons, and daughters who care about their employees and their community. Current pressures throughout the health, education, and social service sectors are evident and will likely continue growing.

Saskatchewan's economic opportunities will be lost if we do not have the well-trained, educated, and healthy workforce necessary to take advantage of them.

The Chamber encourages the next government of Saskatchewan to invest in what matters most to create a thriving and healthy Saskatchewan. In particular, the Chamber encourages prioritizing investments in health care, education, infrastructure, and training opportunities.

Increasing investment in these priority areas should be achieved through increased efficiencies and controlling the size of government. It must not be done by increasing taxes, fees, or other various forms of government levies.

Saskatchewan businesses and households have had to make many tough decisions over the past few years to find efficiencies in their budgets – the next Government of Saskatchewan should lead by example and consider the same.

7.2 Workforce

Over the past five years, business leaders routinely identified a lack of available skilled workers as the leading constraint to Saskatchewan's continued growth. However, the structural difficulties of Saskatchewan's workforce are more significant than a shortage of personnel, as some segments of the population continue to be disproportionately unemployed. Enhancing the province's workforce development programs can help alleviate these problems.

A labour shortage reduces the number of services that would otherwise be available to residents and limits the ability of businesses to fulfill new customer demand; alleviating this shortage will boost the quality of life in the province.

7.2.1 PROPOSALS

- Ensure the resources are available to support the timely processing of an expanding number of Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) applications.
- Find a balance between protecting youth and encouraging early labor force engagement. The SCC recommends lowering the age of youth able to work to 13 years old or above and applying age-appropriate changes to the Young Workers Readiness Certificate Course.

7.3 PATHWAYS FOR INCREASING INDIGENOUS OPPORTUNITIES

Increasing Indigenous participation in the labour force must be an imperative for Saskatchewan's next government. Generating meaningful employment opportunities for Indigenous communities will be an essential component to fuel our momentum. This can only be achieved by creating mutually beneficial partnerships with Indigenous organizations and communities built on trust and respect.

Creating the space to allow for these partnerships to exist in the renewable energy space, without needing to involve government or Crown Corporations will create more meaningful partnerships and generate further opportunities for Indigenous communities and Saskatchewan's economy.

Creating right-sized opportunities for Indigenous-owned companies in government contracting and procurement will allow them to be more competitive on government bids and will help propel these companies forward.

Enhanced training and development opportunities for Indigenous peoples can address crucial gaps in our current labour market and will ensure everyone benefits from a growing Saskatchewan economy.

7.3.1 PROPOSALS

- Implement and expand upon initiatives tailored to the specific needs of Indigenous peoples to address skill gaps and facilitate access to training.
- Create and promote support mechanisms to encourage establishing and growing Indigenous-owned businesses and enterprises.
- Continue to emphasize Indigenous Awareness Training for government employees.

7.4 RETAINING SKILLED PROFESSIONALS

Saskatchewan has the most aggressive labour credentialing strategy in the country. In addition to increasing education and development opportunities to better align with the needs of the economy, the next government of Saskatchewan must focus on retaining the skilled professionals we train and who currently call Saskatchewan home. Creating additional incentives for

professionals in high-demand industries should be explored by the government. Focusing on increasing affordability and providing high-quality core services will complement government policies.

7.4.1 PROPOSALS

- Create additional incentives for high-demand industries.
- Develop a strategy to retain young professionals and skilled newcomers in Saskatchewan - that includes setting a provincial retention target.^x

KEEPING SASKATCHEWAN STRONG: NEWCOMER RETENTION TARGET

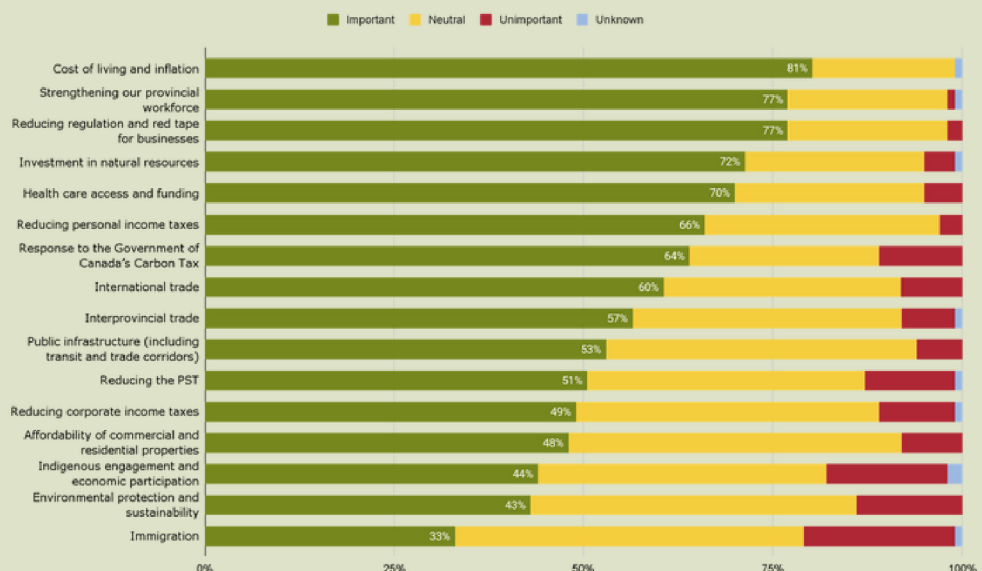
According to the latest report from Statistics Canada, many newcomers to the province are choosing not to stay in Saskatchewan.

According to the report, 42.1 per cent of the people who came to Saskatchewan in 2016 ended up leaving the province in the next five years. That number was 27.8 per cent, for people who came to the province in 2012.

Focusing on retaining an increasing percentage of newcomers must be a priority for the next Government of Saskatchewan.

IMPORTANCE OF ELECTION ISSUES

Rate the importance of the following potential election issues to your business.



7.5 Infrastructure

Saskatchewan's economy is driven by our ability to export the goods and resources we produce efficiently and securely. Our vast, remote landscape means the infrastructure needs of the province and its many communities are diverse, but our export-based economy requires the efficient transportation of goods to enable economic growth and increase productivity. As a landlocked province, this presents many challenges. However, as the province looks to increase its exports and grow its economy the necessity of facilitating the development of this supporting infrastructure will only increase - as will the demands on our existing infrastructure.

Investing in infrastructure is not just about the highways and rail lines we need to connect Saskatchewan's suppliers with customers worldwide; it's also about connecting our province's residents with each other, people, and businesses worldwide.

Broadband connectivity is crucial to fuelling the momentum of a modern economy.

The Saskatchewan Broadband Action Committee was formed in 2021 to address the exacerbated demand on the province's wireless network as more people continued to work from home. The Committee is comprised several stakeholders from a cross-section of provincial, local, and Indigenous organizations and service providers.

In October 2023, the Committee presented the Government of Saskatchewan with key recommendations to help address Saskatchewan's connectivity issues. Among them was creating an Industry Collaboration Table, chaired by the province, to improve market competition and remove federal and provincial policies hindering a level playing field.

Connectivity is the responsibility of both the provincial and federal governments. Saskatchewan continues to receive the lowest

per-capita investment from the federal government compared to federal broadband investments nationwide.^{xi} Working with the federal government to fill this gap must be a priority for the next Government of Saskatchewan.

The Chamber strongly encourages the next provincial government to prioritize investments in new infrastructure to enable increased productivity and economic growth and to continue investing in renewing Saskatchewan's aging infrastructure assets.

7.5.1 PROPOSALS

- Prioritize improvements to transportation infrastructure to facilitate the transportation of Saskatchewan products to market.
- Work with provincial partners to advocate for improvements to essential infrastructure, such as expanding ports and increasing railway capacity.
- Create the space to expand partnerships between SaskTel and private sector suppliers to increase connectivity for households and SMEs outside major urban centers
- Establish an Industry Collaboration Table based on the recommendation of the Saskatchewan Broadband Action Committee.



8. CONCLUSION

The provincial election provides an opportunity for citizens to evaluate the past performance of our elected leaders and their future vision for Saskatchewan. Economic considerations are often not at the forefront of these debates, but they are the foundation upon which most pressing needs like health and education rely.

Strategic decision-making has changed Saskatchewan's economic fortune over the past decade. It is important that this process stays on track. The membership of the

Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce has put forward 23 actionable items in this platform that will build an attractive, competitive, growing business environment in the province. These proposals are based on sound principles and could fit any ideology; our organization hopes they will be used as fully as possible to help shape the discussion in the upcoming provincial election.

These ideas are good for business and, even more importantly, for Saskatchewan. Thank you for reading *Fueling Momentum 2024* and for your continued support of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce and our advocacy efforts.



SOURCES

- i Government of Saskatchewan, "Corporation Income Tax" (2023), online: Government of Saskatchewan <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/taxes-licensing-and-reporting/provincial-taxes-policies-and-bulletins/corporation-income-tax>.
- ii Government of Alberta, "About Tax and Levy Rates and Prescribed Interest Rates" (2023), online: Government of Alberta <https://www.alberta.ca/about-tax-levy-rates-prescribed-interest-rates>.
- iii Statistics Canada, "Labour Force Survey, January 2024" (14 February 2024), online: Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240214/dq240214a-eng.htm>.
- iv Bank of Canada, "Time to Break the Glass: Fixing Canada's Productivity Problem" (March 2024), online: Bank of Canada <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/2024/03/time-to-break-the-glass-fixing-canadas-productivity-problem/>.
- v Government of Saskatchewan, "Corporation Income Tax" (2023), online: Government of Saskatchewan <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/taxes-licensing-and-reporting/provincial-taxes-policies-and-bulletins/corporation-income-tax>.
- vi Government of Alberta, "About Tax and Levy Rates and Prescribed Interest Rates" (2023), online: Government of Alberta <https://www.alberta.ca/about-tax-levy-rates-prescribed-interest-rates>.
- vii Department of Finance Canada, "Consultations on the Investment Tax Credit for Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage" (2021), online: Government of Canada <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/programs/consultations/2021/investment-tax-credit-carbon-capture-utilization-storage.html>.
- viii Canadian Chamber of Commerce, "A Portrait of Small Business in Canada: Adaption, Agility, All at Once" (2023), online: Canadian Chamber of Commerce <https://chamber.ca/news/a-portrait-of-small-business-in-canada-adaption-agility-all-at-once/#:~:text=Highlights%20from%20the%20report,employed%20over%2011%20million%20people>.
- ix Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, "2024-25 Provincial Budget Submission to Minister Harpauer" (2024), online: Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce <https://saskchamber.com/2024-25-provincial-budget-submission-to-minister-harpauer/>.
- x Statistics Canada, "Labour Force Survey, January 2024" (14 February 2024), online: Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240214/dq240214a-eng.htm>.
- xi Saskatchewan Broadband Action Committee, "A Broadband Development & Investment Framework for the Province of Saskatchewan (2023-2027)" (October 2023).
- xii SaskToday, "Bridging the Gap: How the Port of Vancouver Supports Saskatchewan's Trade" (2024), online: SaskToday <https://www.sasktoday.ca/sponsored-content/bridging-the-gap-how-the-port-of-vancouver-supports-saskatchewan-trade-7997398>.



Phone: 306-781-3121

Email: info@saskchamber.com

Website: saskchamber.com

@saskchamber

