



**Media Release**  
**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Kelowna Chamber Addresses Federal Issues in Ottawa**

Representatives from the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce held meetings in Ottawa with federal ministers and senior policy staff. President Wes Shields and CEO Weldon LeBlanc travelled to Ottawa for meetings to discuss key issues such as transportation, crime and safety, housing, and other economic initiatives.

In addition, meetings were held with Perrin Beatty, President and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, and senior staff to coordinate lobby efforts of the Kelowna Chamber with the national organization.

On the issue of crime and safety, the Chamber met with federal officials to gain continued federal support to maintain the organized crime task force established in Kelowna. The work of this task force is aimed at curbing the impact of organized crime in the region. Established in 2009, funding for the unit is expected to expire in 2011.

In a meeting on transportation, the Chamber discussed public transit and Highway 97 infrastructure. The movement of goods and services and transportation of employees is crucial to maintaining a vibrant economy. The Kelowna Chamber is working with Chambers throughout the Okanagan to lobby government for a long-term transportation strategy for the region.

A meeting addressing affordable housing was held with senior policy staff to discuss options to address this issue. Affordable housing is recognized as a key component to the retention and recruitment of employees. With low rental vacancies in Kelowna, discussions in Ottawa centered on the role of the federal government in increasing the inventory of rental accommodations.

"Affordable housing for the employees of our members is central in our efforts to retain staff and recruit people to Kelowna", states Wes Shields, President of the Kelowna Chamber. "This is a key barrier we need to address as the economy continues to rebound".

The Kelowna Chamber meets annually with Ministers and senior staff in Ottawa as part of its lobby efforts. "These meetings are a crucial part of our lobbying efforts", says Shields. "Face-to-face discussions are very productive in finding solutions to our complex issues".

The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce is the largest Chamber outside of the Lower Mainland. Focusing on connection, value, and influence for its members the Chamber pro-actively works with all levels of government to reduce barriers to the Okanagan economy.

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