

April 27, 2013

Board of Directors
Toronto Board of Trade
1 First Canadian Place
P.O. Box 60
Toronto, ON M5X1C1

Dear Board of Directors:

The Mississauga Board of Trade wishes to formally convey its concern, disappointment and deep disapproval of Toronto Board of Trade's recent name change to Toronto Region Board of Trade.

The Mississauga Board of Trade is proud to be part of a network of 22 local Boards of Trades and Chambers of Commerce active throughout the Greater Toronto Area. Similar to the Toronto Board of Trade, each plays an important role in their local community, contributing to business and economic development, policy advocacy, and engagement in many local activities to improve quality of life in their respective communities. Through a long-standing history of collaboration and cooperation, coupled with our efforts to strengthen the network through the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, we have been and will continue to be a strong collective advocate on regional policy and business issues.

Toronto Board of Trade's name change leads to confusion and infringes on the local geographic scope of other Boards of Trade. Your formal justification for the name change-- that it "reflects the regional composition of your membership" and "advocacy initiatives"-- is not unique. Our Board of Trade, too, enjoys pan-regional membership, with many of our policy advocacy priorities being similarly regional in nature. To unilaterally anoint oneself to be the GTA regional chamber, is presumptuous, provocative and ignores the reality and diversity that exists in our region.

It is most unfortunate that what your Board purports as "taking the leadership" as conveyed by your Chair in our meeting on March 11, has in reality had the exact opposite effect. True leadership would have dictated prior discussion and consultation with other chambers and key stakeholders across the region, which you failed to do. True leadership recognizes a more effective approach to serving the best interests of business across the region can be achieved only through cooperation and collaboration with the network of strong and active chambers throughout the GTA. By contrast, we embrace our partnerships through the Ontario Chamber of

Commerce, under which we are formalizing a GTA Chamber Caucus to speak with one regional voice on business policy advocacy priorities. We believe in our collective ambition. The Toronto Board's action, while ambitious, cannot be viewed as collective.

Having said that, had Toronto Board of Trade chosen to consult on its name change, it would have not been favourably received for the very reasons expressed.

As a result of your decision, the lack of any consultation or cooperation, and steadfast positioning to advance your own agenda at the expense of other GTA chambers and the business communities we collectively serve, you have lost the support of and credibility with your neighbouring chambers and many other key stakeholders in the region, including Mississauga Board of Trade.

We are concerned that with a regional name and mandate the Toronto Board of Trade intends to actively pursue membership and sponsorship from Mississauga businesses, which may impact our organization. As a business organization, we support competition, however we should not need to compete with the Toronto Board of Trade in Mississauga. This exercise will prove to be an unnecessary distraction for us all, and will continue to confuse businesses in our community. Should local businesses be misled to provide support to Toronto Board of Trade by believing that your organization is the regional GTA chamber - we would view this to be fundamentally dishonest and something we would unequivocally dispute.

What is most concerning to us is the Toronto Board of Trade, by action or by virtue of its name change, is purporting to speak on behalf of all businesses in the GTA, including those in Mississauga. When Toronto Board of Trade speaks, you will not reflect the views of our local Mississauga business community. This has serious implications for policy priorities that Mississauga Board of Trade is advancing. Toronto does not speak for Mississauga. This was made clear with your recent support of a parking levy to support transit infrastructure. Such a levy would disproportionately disadvantage businesses outside the city of Toronto. With this position alone, it is clear that the Toronto Board of Trade is either unable or unwilling to fairly represent businesses across the region.

What Toronto Board of Trade unfortunately does not recognize is that local matters. Our Board of Trade has local leaders, we engage local business, and we are entrenched in this community working with local stakeholders and organizations. This cannot be represented and served by a business association in Toronto artificially and wrongly claiming to be the regional chamber.

It is important that you, the Board of Directors of the Toronto Board of Trade, clearly understand these concerns and their implications. As prominent business leaders, representing respected organizations who are entrusted to provide leadership to your Board of Trade and to business,

you have, perhaps unwittingly, created a situation that has the potential to undermine the regional network of chambers that supports business across our region.

We do hope that you, as the leadership of Toronto Board of Trade, recognize the gravity of this situation. We ask that you revert back to Toronto Board of Trade and its original mandate. Should this continue, we will pursue all options to our avail to rectify this untenable situation. While this would be detrimental to our long standing partnership, it may prove to be fully necessary under these circumstances.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Ras". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "R".

Karen Ras
Chair
Mississauga Board of Trade

- c.c. Ontario Chamber of Commerce
- GTA Board of Trades and Chambers of Commerce
- GTA Mayors and Regional Chairs
- Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne
- Canadian Chamber of Commerce