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TEI Supports Enactment of a Harmonized Sales Tax in Ontario

- 9/15/2009



September 2009

TO: Members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

On March 10, 2009, the Government of Canada and Province of Ontario agreed to work toward implementation of a harmonized sales tax (HST) regime effective July 1, 2010, when Ontario's current retail sales tax (RST) will be combined with the federal goods and services tax (GST) to create a single sales tax rate of 13 percent (*i.e.*, 8-percent provincial tax and 5-percent federal tax). Tax Executives Institute (TEI) applauds this initiative and urges the Members of Ontario's Legislative Assembly to support legislation to create a single sales tax.

TEI is the preeminent association of business tax executives. The Institute's 7,000 professionals manage the tax affairs of 3,200 of the leading companies in Canada, the United States, Asia, and Europe and must contend daily with the planning and compliance aspects of Canada's business tax laws. Canadians make up 10 percent of TEI's membership, with our Canadian members belonging to chapters in Toronto, Calgary, Montreal, and Vancouver, which together constitute one of our nine geographic regions. Our non-Canadian members (including those in Europe and Asia) often work for companies with substantial activities in Ontario.

Studies by the C.D. Howe Institute and Centre for Spatial Economics have shown that harmonization — by changing how the tax is applied and collected — would lower business costs and encourage investment, as it has been shown in other jurisdictions. Canada is the only 1 of 30 OECD countries still using a two-tier sales tax system.

Ontario's adoption of an HST regime would produce significant benefits for government and taxpayers by reducing the complexity and the costs of compliance with (and enforcement of) multiple transaction tax systems. We urge the Legislative Assembly to move forward with this important initiative.

If you have any questions about TEI's position, please contact TEI's Vice President for Canadian Affairs Sherrie Ann Pollock at 416.955.7373 (sherrieann.pollock@rbcdexia.com).

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