

August 8, 2022

Re: Item 8.2 – Hamilton Region Decarbonization Hub

Dear Members of the General Issues Committee,

As interim CEO of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, Hamilton's oldest institution at 177 years old, I have the privilege of speaking for our 1,000+ members that employ over 75,000 people in our community. The Chamber would like to take this opportunity to highlight its support for the proposed Hamilton Region Decarbonization Hub and to endorse the recommendations contained within the inter-departmental staff report before you today.

While Hamilton's economy is recognized as one of the most diverse in Canada, we are proudly known for our manufacturing economic roots, with steelmaking being a particular forte of ours. To this day, Hamilton maintains a robust industrial manufacturing sector, employing thousands of residents and generating millions of dollars in GDP annually. It is critical to recognize the economic transition to net-zero emissions will impact all sectors of our economy, but those in the traditional industrial manufacturing and spinoff economies will face an even more enormous challenge due to rising energy costs, high emissions output, and market forces, potentially disrupting a significant source of Hamilton's economic activity and the lives of residents.

The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce recently hosted the 5th Annual Canada's Innovation Corridor Summit that gathered governmental, economic, environmental, and social leaders from across the GTHA to discuss the region's collective transition to net-zero. The message was clear: private enterprise is acting now to significantly reduce their operating emissions, but they cannot do it alone. All levels of government must facilitate smart investments and creative policymaking solutions to support our economy as it transitions.

The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce believes that investing in a Regional Decarbonization Hub is an exceptional opportunity for the City of Hamilton to take leadership and action for the longevity of its industry, to spur new investment, secure thousands of good paying jobs, and continue to support the ongoing diversification of Hamilton's economy.

The concept of a decarbonization hub has already been proven in other contexts with favourable conditions for success similar to what we find here in Hamilton, particularly along our industrial bayfront area. Along a segment of our waterfront and adjacent lands is a corridor of dense industrial manufacturing and spinoff roles that will face similar

challenges in terms of updating their processes and technologies to reduce overall emissions profiles. There exists an opportunity to assist these industries in their transition by establishing a centralized resource and research space that the regional decarbonization hub can serve to fulfil.

While the hub itself will be a go-to resource for local employers as they navigate their transition to net-zero emissions, it also serves additional purposes. Establishing a decarbonization hub would demonstrate a cross-sectoral commitment of community partners looking to advance Hamilton as a leader in economic transition and to attract the brightest talent to invest here. This investment would not only work to retain critical manufacturing jobs, but also create new ones in the decarbonization economy. This hub is truly a vision project for Hamilton and has the potential to create impressive synergies between research, enterprise, and community to establish Hamilton as one of the leading decarbonized economies in North America.

Through the Chamber's ongoing partnership with Hamilton Community Enterprises to advance its Energy Harvesting Project that seeks to expand Hamilton's existing district energy system and network, we are already seeing the interest and investments private sector partners are making to decarbonize their operations. These employers are seeking creative and viable decarbonization solutions to ensure the longevity of their operations and to improve their bottom line. There is a huge appetite for support and discovery in collaborating with others on best practices, and the Chamber believes that a decarbonization hub would only serve to benefit our members and community in taking climate action.

In closing, the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce strongly encourages members of the General Issues Committee to endorse this request and be a part of installing Hamilton's future economy. The Chamber looks forward to providing ongoing support and in-kind services to advance this initiative collaboratively. There are numerous instances of successful partnerships with the City in the past and we are eager to participate together in establishing a Hamilton Region Decarbonization Hub.

Sincerely,



Marie Nash
Interim CEO