

Saskatchewan Restaurants Canada Member Coffee Meeting

Happy New Year to you all!

As some of you may have heard Dwayne Marling is no longer with Restaurants Canada. As a result, after a 10-year absence, I will once again be taking over as your Restaurants Canada government affairs representative. Some of you may remember me from my previous time working on Saskatchewan issues prior to 2006. I would like to reintroduce myself to you and discuss the state of Saskatchewan's restaurant industry and provincial issues impacting our industry focusing on a possible new threat of a 5% meal tax.

Here are the meeting details:

Date: Tuesday, February 7th
Time: 9:30-10:30 am
Location: Boston Pizza North
535 Albert Street North, Regina

Space is limited so please RSVP by filling out this attendance form: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TJ33TJ2>

As many of you know the Saskatchewan government has been floating the idea of removing certain PST exemptions, including the restaurant meal exemption, in an effort to help reduce the province's deficit. A new 5% tax on restaurant meals would raise an additional \$74 million in PST revenue for the province but will have a devastating impact on the restaurant industry, especially during the current economic downturn. Not only would a new meal tax increase costs for restaurants guests and reduce sales, it would also make our segment of the food industry less competitive as our closest competitors, prepared meals available at grocery stores, remain completely tax exempt. The introduction of GST in 1991 and British Columbia's short lived HST experiment from 2010-2012 are proof of the negative impact a new restaurant meal sales tax has on restaurant sales growth and job creation.

Some of you will recall the previous Saskatchewan NDP government proposed to add PST to restaurant meals twice in 2001 and 2005 but backed down both times as a result of two successful meal tax campaigns organized by Restaurants Canada and Saskatchewan restaurateurs. Restaurants Canada has written to Premier Wall to express the industry's concerns on the issue and is scheduled to meet with both Finance Minister Doherty and Economy Minister Harrison the afternoon of February 7th. I will be urging the government to continue to treat all food equally. At our meeting that morning we will discuss messaging for the meetings with Minister Doherty and Harrison later that afternoon and a strategy, including another possible public meal tax campaign, to prevent PST being added to restaurant meals. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to attend the February 7th member meeting.

In the mean time I would encourage you to contact your local MLA to voice your concern about a possible new meal tax ensuring they understand the negative impact a new 5% Saskatchewan tax would have on your business, staff and customers.

Please do not hesitate to contact me anytime with any questions you may have on this or any other issue at mark@restaurantscanada.org. I look forward to seeing you on February 7th.



Mark von Schellwitz

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