

## **Canadian Fire Chiefs Call for Tax Support for Fire Safety in Canada**

**OTTAWA, November 28, 2007** – The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) today repeated its call for the federal government to provide personal tax credits to support the work of Fire Services across Canada.

In a pre-Budget submission to the Standing Committee on Finance, Ottawa Fire Chief Rick Larabie said “A prosperous society needs more than just financial security. ...the federal government has a significant role to play in ensuring that all Canadians receive a basic level of protection against fire and other perils.”

Pointing out that more than 91 per cent of Canadian fire departments are served exclusively by volunteer firefighters and officers, Chief Larabie told Standing Committee members that recruitment and retention are growing problems for many smaller communities. He noted that without measures to encourage volunteers, municipalities will face either diminished protection or increased taxation – neither of which will enhance their prosperity.

In its 2006 consideration of a CAFC proposal regarding tax credits, the Standing Committee stated that its belief that “volunteers – and the hours of service they give – are important to the fabric of our nation.... they provide essential services that otherwise would not be performed, or that would be performed by municipalities and funded by higher taxes. Volunteer service is, in our view, an activity that deserves recognition.”

Despite the Committee’s support for the concept of tax credits for volunteer firefighters, Bill C-273, introduced in the last Parliament to implement a personal tax credit, was killed, ostensibly because the Committee wanted additional information from CAFC. CAFC has provided extensive documentation to respond to the Committee’s questions and, in the words of Chief Larabie, “CAFC finds it difficult to understand the Government’s continued intransigence on this issue.”

CAFC is a non-partisan national association comprising some 1000 Fire Chiefs and is the only organization that speaks for all elements of the Fire Service in Canada.

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