

**Opening Remarks by Elyse Allan  
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**Public Policy Forum  
24<sup>th</sup> Annual Testimonial Dinner and Awards**

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Thank you, Premier Alward, and good evening everyone.

I'm honoured to co-chair tonight's celebration, and be part of this inspiring assembly – people who share a belief in the value of good public policy to build a stronger Canada.

There are many reasons to be bullish about Canada's ongoing prosperity. I want to focus on one, and touch on some compelling areas for public policy action that surrounds it.

I just returned from a GE meeting in Germany, where 140 senior leaders discussed global trends and areas of growth. We identified a dozen key regions for us around the world – and Canada is one.

We're now seeing a rising global demand for resources and commodities, driven by economic recovery in mature economies, and extraordinary growth in developing economies. And that puts Canada in the spotlight.

This presents tremendous opportunities for our nation, but some challenges too.

Our resources and commodities sectors have been a huge strength for Canada, contributing greatly to our enviable economic performance.

Mining, oil and gas extraction contributed \$54 billion to Canada's GDP in 2010. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting added another \$25 billion. These industries in turn stimulate huge demand for the manufacturing and services sectors.

The question, however, is whether we're maximizing the opportunity presented by our resources and commodities.

We need to be more than the proverbial drawers of water and hewers of wood. For the sake of our competitiveness we need to also lead in everything from operating efficiencies to the value-added technology at every stage of these industries.

That takes innovation. The commodity and resource sectors – and Canadian firms in general – need to diversify into advanced and unique processes and products. Canadian ingenuity, as much as Canadian oil or Canadian minerals, can be our real advantage.

We have to think creatively about how to capture all that potential.

Here's the reality. Many of Canada's most highly valued natural resources – fishing and agri-food products, oil and natural gas, metals and minerals, and forest products, to name a few – are located in remote areas of the country.

These communities are positioned to play a critical role in not only Canada's economic future, but in worldwide economic development.

That's why GE Canada launched a project in January to explore how government and business can, together and separately, to drive expanded private sector investment in these remote communities.

Our surveys, and roundtable discussions will result in a report with policy recommendations. It will be released in September at the annual meeting of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, our partner in this venture.

To realize the economic opportunity of our remote communities, so many of which are resource-based, we need to address issues like labour, learning, transportation and infrastructure. As an increasingly urban society, we need to somehow connect the vibrancy, creativity and capabilities of our cities to the possibilities in remote Canada. That type of engagement will pay enormous dividends for those communities and the nation as a whole.

To make the most of our economic potential, we must also develop sound policy in several areas, certainly when it comes to energy.

EPIC, the Energy Policy Institute of Canada, is making an important contribution. EPIC comprises leaders from energy companies, large energy

consumers, and others who care about the future of our energy industries and is collaborating with many organizations.

We're in the midst of drafting a pan-Canadian approach to energy as a foundation for recommendations to government authorities responsible for energy and environment policy.

Canada's future prosperity will be driven, in large part, by growth in both sustainable hydrocarbon production and renewable energy.

EPIC's vision includes a strong emphasis on technology and innovation to improve environmental performance and cost competitiveness across the full spectrum of energy supply and use.

We also see Canada emerging as a leader in attracting the human and financial capital to develop and commercialize clean technologies.

In energy, and other resources and commodities, Canada has a strong global standing – but we can do and be so much more.

By developing and exporting our technological and managerial expertise, our distinctive products, our innovative processes, and our Canadian know-how, we'll create a new economic advantage for our country.

In short, we'll become equally renowned for our natural resources and our intellectual resources – both of which will be in high demand in this global economy.

If we get this right, there are endless opportunities in trade, in jobs, and in leveraging what we develop to diversify the economy by wisely reinvesting the capital from our resources back into our country.

This is an exciting time for Canada – a time that demands a robust dialogue on how we can improve our competitiveness, our technology based trade and our quality of life.

This kind of dialogue gets at the heart of the Public Policy Forum.

One of the Forum's founding principles is that the business of government shouldn't be left to government alone. When the public, private, non-profit and voluntary sectors are all heard on the key issues of the day, better public policy emerges.

That's why I'm proud to be involved with the Forum, champion these frank discussions, and tonight help celebrate the honourees who've made outstanding contributions to public policy and public management in our country.

In my view – and by turning out in such numbers, I think in your view as well – c'est certainement quelque chose à célébrer.

C'est donc avec grand plaisir que je participe à cette soirée.

An evening like this only adds to my confidence about our ability to generate thoughtful discussion and prudent policy around the issues I've discussed.

By doing so, we'll seize the moment and harness opportunities now and well into the future – for the sake of our economy, society, and collective well-being.

Thank you.