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Small Business Matters Coalition extremely pleased with private member's bill taking action on credit card interchange fees

Toronto, ONTARIO--(February 26, 2016) – The Small Business Matters Coalition, representing over 98,000 Canadian small business retailers, are very pleased to learn of a private member's bill to take action on credit card interchange fees introduced by Linda LaPointe, Liberal MP for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

"MP Lapointe's announcement today acknowledges that credit card merchant fees charged to retailers across Canada are not only too high but also disproportionately impact small businesses," says Gary Sands, Chair of the Coalition. "Credit card swipe fees charged to Canadian retailers had been amongst the highest of anywhere in the world. These fees had represented well over \$5 Billion in revenue for the credit card companies annually, while many small business retailers are barely surviving with razor thin margins." Echoing MP LaPointe's comments on the bill, Mr. Sands emphasized that "these rates prevent small business retailers from investing in their business or employing more people – two points critical to overcoming Canada's budget situation."

Speaking on behalf of the Coalition, Mr. Sands said members had been frustrated by the previous government's inaction on the issue of excessive credit card merchant fees. "We are very happy that a member of the government caucus has brought this matter forward so early in her government's term and are hopeful that the bill will be widely supported by other members in the party."

The Coalition has long supported the approach taken in other countries that have reviewed merchant credit cards rates in an effort to determine whether they were commercially reasonable. Sands, points to Australia and the EU where rates of 0.5% and 0.3% have been introduced after long study. "Retailers cannot deny that credit cards are an important element of their business operations however, the excessive rates they are charged for such transactions in Canada do not justify the cost. This is what was found in Australia and the EU and has resulted in rates being capped in those countries. MP LaPointe's bill allows for such a review and potential cap on fees."

The Coalition looks forward to working with the government in the months ahead as we continue our journey to achieving a fair, transparent and accountable payments industry for small business in Canada.

