

NEWS RELEASE

Ontarians outside Greater Toronto and Golden Horseshoe still hurting economically

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For immediate release

TORONTO—Decent economic performance—especially job growth—in Toronto and the surrounding Golden Horseshoe region is hiding the fact that the rest of Ontario still hasn't fully recovered from the 2009 recession, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Looking at provincial-level statistics masks how bad things really are elsewhere in Ontario, and recent upbeat comments from the government about the state of the province’s economy seem detached from the hardship many Ontarians are experiencing,” said Ben Eisen, director of the Fraser Institute’s Ontario Prosperity Initiative and co-author of *The Five Solitudes of Ontario: A Regional Analysis of Labour Market Performance in Post-Recession Ontario*.

The study finds that total employment in Ontario outside the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) stood at 2.24 million in 2008. By the end of 2015, the most recent year of available data, that figure stood at 2.17 million, still 70,000 jobs shy of pre-recession levels.

While the densely populated GGH has experienced net job growth since the recession, the rest of the province—which also includes millions of people—is performing very poorly.

For example, Eastern Ontario (excluding Ottawa) shed 31,000 jobs, dropping from 400,000 in 2008 to 369,000 in 2015.

Northern Ontario—with a larger population than any of P.E.I., Newfoundland or New Brunswick—lost 21,000 jobs, dropping from 367,000 to 346,000.

And Southwestern Ontario, once the heart of the province’s manufacturing sector and home to approximately as many people as all the Maritime provinces combined, remains 20,000 jobs below its pre-recession level of 791,000.

Outside the GGH, only the Ottawa area added jobs—10,000 since 2008.

“The economic malaise and poor jobs numbers in Atlantic Canada are well known, but there are big, equally populous regions in Ontario where there has been little or no employment growth since the great recession, and their economic struggles shouldn’t be ignored by policymakers at Queen’s Park,” Eisen said.

“In Ontario, it’s important to look beyond provincewide statistics because the economic picture is not at all pretty in many parts of the province.”

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