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Finance Minister's Attacks on Ontario are Only Hurting Ontario Families, says Liberal Party Finance Critic

TORONTO— Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty is weakening confidence in the province's economy and hurting Ontario families with the increasing barrage of insults he is hurling at the Ontario Liberal government, Liberal Finance Critic John McCallum said today.

"The number one job of Canada's Finance Minister is to bolster confidence in the Canadian economy and by attacking the investment climate in Ontario Mr. Flaherty is failing at that job in the most spectacular of fashions," said Mr. McCallum. "To repeatedly tell investors from around the world that the last place they want to start a business is in Ontario is not only irresponsible, it is reprehensible and Mr. Flaherty should apologize to the 12 million people who live here."

Mr. McCallum explained that as far as he can tell, there are only two possible explanations for why Mr. Flaherty would make undermining the investment climate of his home province his new pet hobby.

"The first possibility is that Mr. Flaherty's allegiances lie with the Conservative Party of Canada rather than the people of Ontario and he is under orders to assign blame anywhere but the doorstep of 24 Sussex Drive, where the Prime Minister has all but ignored the growing manufacturing crisis in Ontario," he said. "The other possibility is that his allegiances are only to himself and he is preparing a leadership bid for the Ontario Conservative Party by positioning himself as the only Conservative who can take on Dalton McGuinty."

Mr. McCallum pointed out that on top of the damage Mr. Flaherty's comments are wreaking on the already uncertain economy in Ontario, his attacks are also hurting the Canadian federation beyond the province's borders.

"Canadians living in every other province and territory should be concerned by this new domineering approach to federalism," said Mr. McCallum. "If Prime Minister Harper is perfectly willing to let his federal attack dog tell the province of

Ontario how it should structure its own affairs, there is no reason to believe that any of the other 12 premiers won't be next on the Prime Minister's hit list.”

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