



HOTEL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
ASSOCIATION DES HÔTELS DU CANADA

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

Small and Independent Canadian Businesses Say to Visa and MasterCard – “Stop Sticking it to Us”

Ottawa, September 15, 2008 – The Retail Council of Canada (RCC) and a coalition of like-minded associations including the Hotel Association of Canada (HAC) launched “www.StopStickingItToUs.ca”, a national campaign against Big Credit Card companies and the banks that issue their cards that have been imposing skyrocketing hidden credit card fees on all Canadians. The campaign targets the more than \$4.5 billion dollars worth of hidden credit card fees paid by Canadians each year.

As Canadians prepare to go to the polls this fall, they will be looking for strong leadership on this issue and the effect it has on the Canadian economy.

Over the next few weeks the coalition will be asking small businesses and Canadians to stand up and tell the Credit Card companies and the banks that issue their cards to stop sticking it to us.

Interchange fees represent an enormous cost for average Canadians and any organization that accepts payment by credit card including merchants, charities, schools, restaurants, hotels, inns, motels, resorts, government services and others. The average Canadian household pays hundreds of dollars a year in interchange fees without even knowing it, as they are a hidden portion of the cost of virtually every transaction they make.

A new poll conducted by Nanos Research found that:

- 55% of Canadians had a poor understanding of the fees associated with credit cards.
- 63% of Canadians believe that credit card fees are increasing with no noticeable increase in value.
- 77% of Canadians believe that credit card companies are not fully transparent in explaining their fees for credit cards.

Nearly \$2 of every \$100 Canadians spend using credit cards goes directly to the Big Credit Card companies and their issuing banks. Canada is one of the few industrialized countries in the world that doesn't regulate these fees, which is why they are among the highest in the world - and they continue to escalate.

“Big Credit Card companies and their banks are taking advantage of local retailers, businesses and all Canadians by exploiting loopholes that keep the true cost of skyrocketing fees from the average consumer,” says Diane J. Brisebois, President and CEO of Retail Council of Canada. “Our coalition is seeking government action and will be calling on political candidates to take a stance on what their position on this issue is.”

These unregulated and skyrocketing fees are of particular concern in the current period of economic softening in Canada, when consumers and businesses are pressured to be increasingly cost-conscious.

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“Costs continue to mount for the lodging industry across Canada”, says HAC President Tony Pollard. “We are calling on government to put a stop to this unfettered and unjustifiable greed in the fees collected.”

“Canadians pay among the highest credit card fees in the world,” says Brisebois. “Retailers and other business are not opposed to paying fees, as long as they correspond to the actual cost of the service that is rendered. Big Credit Card companies and the banks issuing their cards are out of control and their practices need to be regulated.”

StopStickingItToUs Coalition members include:

Retail Council of Canada
Alberta Liquor Stores Association
Canadian Booksellers Association
Canadian Convenience Stores Association
Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors
Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers
Canadian Jewellers Association
Conseil Quebecois du commerce de detail (Quebec Retail Council)
Hotel Association of Canada
Ontario Accommodation Association
Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association

Survey methodology

The random telephone survey by Nanos Research polled 1,000 Canadians from August, 20 to August 27, 2008. The margin for accuracy for a sample of 1,000 is +3.1%, 19 times out of 20. For more information, visit www.nanosresearch.com.

About Retail Council of Canada

Retail Council of Canada (RCC) has been the Voice of Retail in Canada since 1963. We speak for an industry that touches the daily lives of Canadians in every corner of the country – by providing jobs, career opportunities, and by investing in the communities we serve. RCC is a not-for-profit, industry-funded association representing more than 40,000 store fronts of all retail formats across Canada, including department, specialty, discount, and independent stores, and online merchants.

About Hotel Association of Canada

The Hotel Association of Canada (HAC) is a professional industry association representing the lodging industry in Canada. Its membership encompasses the provincial and territorial hotel associations, the corporate hotel chains, independent hotels, motels, resorts and the many suppliers to the hotel industry. HAC’s objective is to assist both its national and international members as they endeavour to enhance their competitiveness and achieve their bottom line.

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For more information, visit www.stopstickingittous.ca.

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