

Check Against Delivery



**HOUSE OF COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
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OPENING REMARKS

JIM WESTLAKE, GROUP HEAD, CANADIAN BANKING, RBC

Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you members of the Committee for the opportunity to speak with you today.

I would like to start by saying that Canada has one of the best, most affordable and most efficient banking systems in the world.

The price of retail banking services, including for ATM access, is low relative to other countries, and is driven by intense competition.

Canada has more ATMs per capita than any other country. Our pricing is fair and transparent, based on a pay-for-use principle.

At RBC, our clients benefit from access to Canada's largest distribution network, including more than 1200 branches and business banking centres, telephone and Internet channels, almost 2000 mobile bankers and, of course, almost 4000 ATMs which are available to our clients at no direct charge.

In fact, 80% of our clients do not pay for using our ATMs.

Our network of ATMs is the most extensive in Canada and we are expanding, with plans to deploy more than 400 new machines in the next three years. All of these are RBC machines – we do not own any white label ATMs.

Students benefit from our extensive network. We have 67 ATMs, now or planned, on 35 college and university campuses. And 446 ATMs within 1 km of the 229 university and college campuses across Canada.

Seniors and people with disabilities also benefit. We were the first bank to offer audio enabled machines that are serving as a prototype around the world.

Today, our clients have access to 425 of these "talking" ATMs in Canada and more than 550 machines have been designed so that people in wheelchairs have easier access.

A fundamental part of RBC's philosophy is that we are located in, and contribute to, communities all across Canada – because where our communities succeed, we all succeed.

Our 60,000 employees work hard every day to provide our 12 million clients with financial products, services and advice at competitive prices.

Competition is working and Canadians are being well-served by a stable, efficient banking system that provides maximum choice and convenience.

Any attempts to reduce competition, including additional regulation, will only lead to fewer options for consumers, a point that has been recognized by many, including members of this committee.

Without the flexibility to charge and price on a competitive, user-pay basis, our clients and shareholders would effectively be subsidizing access to our ATM network for clients of our competitors.

It is unlikely that we would be able to continue to maintain a network of 4000 plus ATMs, innovation and access would suffer and costs to consumers would rise.

Increase regulation and you will be reducing choice – for students, seniors, people with disabilities and all Canadians.

Thank you and I would be pleased to answer any questions.