



ALBERTA  
INTERNATIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

*Office of the Minister*

February 23, 2010

Mr. Don Oszli, Chair, and  
Mr. Ken Kobly, President and Chief Executive Officer  
Alberta Chambers of Commerce  
1808, 10025 – 102A Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5J 2Z2

Dear Mr. Oszli and Mr. Kobly:

Thank you for your January 25, 2010 letter and your very kind words of congratulations. I also appreciate you taking the time to outline three policies the Alberta Chambers of Commerce believes are pertinent to my new International and Intergovernmental Relations portfolio.

As Alberta's Minister responsible for trade policy matters, I look forward to working with your organization and with Chambers of Commerce throughout the province to achieve common goals and objectives. As you know, Alberta is an aggressive champion of trade and investment liberalization and, as Premier Stelmach has indicated, there is much to do in the coming months as we work to establish the conditions for continued economic recovery and growth.

Alberta will continue to seize the opportunity to promote the benefits of the *Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA)* to other Canadian provinces at all relevant fora. Any expansion of the agreement would further benefit Canadian businesses, consumers, workers and investors. Active support from the Alberta Chambers' sister organizations in other Canadian jurisdictions could also assist our efforts to further enhance domestic trade.

As you also may be aware, Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan are currently working towards the conclusion of the domestic trade agreement called for under the Western Economic Partnership signed by the Premiers of the three provinces in September 2009. This agreement will build upon the TILMA and it is expected to further influence efforts toward a pan-Canadian free trade market.

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Regarding the issue of the development of Free or Foreign Trade Zones (FTZs) in Canada, I can tell you that the Alberta government has met with the Government of Canada to discuss this issue. Additionally, we are currently working with stakeholders such as Edmonton Airports to review the current structure, regulations and programs for FTZs in Canada. As noted in your letter, issues related to the transparency and accessibility of relevant rules and regulations, limitations on the amount of value-added activity that can occur, and tax treatment, have been identified.

This process has also involved the examination of FTZs in foreign countries, and some consideration of how Canadian tariff, tax and regulatory regimes might be adjusted to facilitate the type of value-added activity that can occur in FTZs. This review is ongoing.

With respect to extended hours of operation at the Wild Horse border, I can inform you that seasonal hours were extended this past year. The U.S. extended its seasonal hours of operation ahead to March 31 (from May 16) and its actual hours of operation to 9:00 pm from 5:00 pm. While Canada did not coordinate with the same hours of operation in the spring, both sides now follow the same seasonal extended hours of operation schedule.

The goal of the Wild Horse Border Committee is to have a 24-hour port. This may not happen in the short-term given the low volume through the crossing and given the current economy. It may be that the most practical solution is to seek a further extension of hours of operation such as from 6:00 am to 11:00 pm each day either on a permanent or seasonal basis.

I look forward to discussing these policies further with you. Please contact my office at 780-427-2585 if you would like to schedule a meeting.

Sincerely yours,



Iris Evans  
Minister