

August 4, 2009

Canada's chambers of commerce campaign for open trade

The Alberta Chambers of Commerce (ACC) has teamed up with its provincial/territorial counterparts and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce to urge our nation's premiers to place a priority on reducing external and internal trade barriers.

Canada's provincial and national chambers of commerce have written the premiers on the eve of their Council of the Federation meetings in Regina from Aug. 5 to 7 asking them to address the three following critical issues:

- protecting Canada from protectionism in the United States;
- negotiating a comprehensive economic partnership with the European Union; and,
- removing interprovincial trade, investment and labour mobility barriers in Canada.

(The letter is attached)

ACC is proud to note Alberta and B.C. have displayed great leadership on the third issue with the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement. ACC has not only applauded this groundbreaking agreement, it has also encouraged Premier Ed Stelmach to promote its expansion across Canada.

ACC's federation of 124 chambers of commerce is also greatly concerned about "Buy American" provisions in the U.S. stimulus package and the other pieces of legislation currently before Congress. We recognize, however, that the U.S. government is within its rights to block foreign producers from its public procurement markets because they are not completely covered under international trade agreements. In June, ACC wrote Premier Stelmach asking him to sign onto the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Government Procurement as a means of helping to provide Alberta companies with access to American state-level procurement projects. ACC also supports the letter written to all premiers urging them to negotiate a comprehensive and reciprocal procurement agreement with the U.S. that keeps markets open in all levels of government for suppliers in both countries.

Canada's national and provincial/territorial chambers believe the Council of the Federation meetings provide the premiers with an ideal opportunity to deal with these vital trade barrier issues.

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