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Alberta Chambers welcomes Canada's move to open procurement markets with U.S.

The Alberta Chambers of Commerce (ACC) is pleased the federal government will counter Buy American provisions in the U.S. stimulus package by signing onto the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Government Procurement.

"Securing open trade at the provincial/territorial and state levels is the best way to offset Buy American provisions," says Ken Kobly, president and CEO of ACC. "A protectionist movement is not in the best interests of business which, until the recession, had been thriving in the free trade climate, and will do so again if markets remain open."

In June 2009, ACC sent a letter to Premier Ed Stelmach urging him to request the federal government sign onto the WTO agreement on Alberta's behalf.

ACC has wanted to see Alberta lead the way among Canada's provinces in securing access to American local- and state-level procurement projects, just as our province has led the way on interprovincial free trade.

International Trade Minister Peter Van Loan's announcement that Canada will secure permanent market access to the U.S. through the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement is a positive step for Alberta business, which strongly believes in free trade and welcomes the reciprocal access it offers in Alberta to American companies.

While signing onto the WTO agreement offers an immediate step towards improving access to the American procurement market, ACC also urges governments in Canada to work aggressively to seek other long-term solutions for securing a comprehensive bilateral agreement with the U.S.

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