

# MEDIA RELEASE



**DPAC-ATLC**



## Ten national associations call on political leaders to fix internal trade in Canada

(Ottawa – April 1, 2008) On the first anniversary of the historic trade agreement between Alberta and British Columbia, a national coalition of ten business, industry and professional associations is urging the federal and provincial governments to cooperate in finding ways to strengthen the economic union.

The internal trade coalition is recommending that Ottawa take the lead in improving trade across Canada by legislating a set of open trade principles and establishing a standing internal trade tribunal to ensure that all parties adhere to those principles.

Representatives of the ten associations say they are encouraged by the year-old Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) between Alberta and British Columbia. Moreover, the coalition notes with interest the recently launched trade negotiations between Ontario and Quebec.

Nevertheless, Canada's economy remains fragmented in ways that drive up costs and weaken competitiveness. As a result, it is often more difficult to move goods and services across provincial boundaries than over our international borders — and the emergence of new trade barriers threatens to further balkanize the Canadian economy.

“Across the country, governments have awakened to the fact that internal trade barriers hurt consumers, discourage investment and damage Canada's international reputation as a place to do business,” said the coalition. “The time has come for a bold new approach that strengthens the economic union and enhances Canada's prosperity and competitiveness.”

As noted by Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach, internal trade issues cost the Canadian economy as much as \$14 billion a year.

The bold approach recommended by the coalition has four key elements that, taken together, would eliminate trade barriers that hamper the domestic economy:

- Federal legislation to establish a set of “open trade principles” designed to ensure a free and open market, without discriminatory practices;
- Creation of a standing internal trade tribunal that would be accessible to all Canadians as a means of resolving internal trade disputes;
- Implementation of all outstanding rulings by panels established under the 12-year-old Agreement on Internal Trade; and,
- An agreement that all tribunal orders and existing panel decisions would be subject to enforcement by the courts at the option of the disputants.

Media Release  
April 1, 2008  
Page 2

The coalition is looking for specific actions from all levels of governments to begin immediate work in this area.

The coalition consists of the Canadian Bankers Association, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute, the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, the Certified General Accountants Association of Canada, the Dairy Processors Association of Canada and the Vegetable Oil Industry of Canada.

-30-

For further information, please contact:

Sean McPhee, President  
Vegetable Oil Industry of Canada  
Cell: 416-970-6878  
Email: [smcphee@voic.ca](mailto:smcphee@voic.ca)

Carole Presseault, Vice-President  
Government & Regulatory Affairs, CGA-Canada  
Cell: 613-796-0422  
Email: [cpresseault@cga-canada.org](mailto:cpresseault@cga-canada.org)

A copy of the coalition's position paper can be downloaded here:  
[www.cga.org/canada/internaltrade](http://www.cga.org/canada/internaltrade)