



WESTERN CANADA ROADBUILDERS & HEAVY CONSTRUCTION
ASSOCIATION (WCR&HCA)
Unit #3-1680 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3H 0Z2

April 8, 2021

Hon. Jim Carr
Minister, Special Representative for the Prairies
jim.carr@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Carr,

Subject: '*Western Canada Trade Gateways and Corridors Program*' - supporting Canada's economic and security interests

The Western Canada Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association (WCR&HCA), founded in 1943, consists of the four roadbuilder & heavy construction associations in each of the western provinces.

It speaks on behalf of the western heavy construction and related industries with a mandate to advocate the need for strategic investments in Canada's core infrastructure and transportation networks, to help grow Canada's economy.

We write in support of a proposition advanced to you in correspondence dated January 21, 2021, from six Manitoba business organizations - *attached*. In it they appealed to you for political leadership to champion a Western Canada Trade Gateway & Corridor Initiative (WCTG&CI).

Clearly, growing Canada's economy is our national top priority. Without this, fiscal balance objectives cannot be addressed, neither can funding existing or enhancing social programming which shapes our quality of life and globally envied standard of living.

The trade-based nature of Canada's economy means that a return to prosperity will not be fully realized without a strategic trade gateway and corridor investment initiative. Canada's economy depends on international trade with exports accounting for some 3 million jobs or 17% of all employment, according to Statistics Canada. In 2019, Canada's trade-to-GDP ratio was just shy of 65%, a relatively consistent annual share of national economic activity.

Of equal importance is that Western Canada is strategically positioned to raise Canada's export profile and potential. It is:

- a vast, resource-rich, value-add manufacturing region with significant, pent-up capacity to produce the goods that are in demand, domestically, continentally, and globally
- at 32% of Canada's population, it contributes 37% of its exports and nearly 38% of Canada's real GDP
- Western Canada's GDP per capita was \$56,000 in 2017, 18% higher than the national average
- The region is book-ended by geographically advantageous port jurisdictions:
 - Manitoba is a trade hub, connected to all cardinal points for trade (Emerson is the busiest land crossing west of Windsor; Churchill is Canada's only Arctic port served by a Class A railroad)
 - British Columbia with its two deep-water ports serves as Canada's primary tie to significant Asia-Pacific global markets

We note that since the above referenced January 2021 communication, you have received letters of support for the WCTG&CI from Gary Mar, President, Canada West Foundation - *attached*; Mary van Buren, President of the Canadian Construction Association (CCA) - *attached*; and Hon. Perrin Beatty, President & CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce – *attached*.

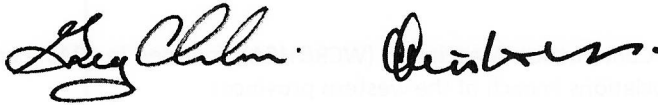
The WCR&HCA Board of Directors at its April 6 meeting unanimously resolved to appeal for your political leadership to advance a WCTG&CI as part of our federal nation-building programming.

As a matter of courtesy, we have copied each party receiving the original letter, authors of the originating letter, organizations submitting subsequent letters of support and the WCR&HCA Board of Directors.

We would appreciate the opportunity of a follow-up discussion on potential next steps.

Yours truly,

WESTERN CANADA ROADBUILDERS & HEAVY CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION (WCR&HCA)



Per:

Greg Orbanski, B.A., CET
Chair

Chris Lorenc, B.A., LL.B.,
President

cc. Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
Hon. Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure & Communities
Hon. Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs
Hon. Omar Alghabra, Minister of Transportation
Hon. Brian Pallister, Premier, Province of Manitoba
His Worship, Mayor Brian Bowman, Mayor, City of Winnipeg
Perrin Beatty, President, Canadian Chamber of Commerce
Dennis Darby, President, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters
Gary Mar, President, Canada West Foundation
Diane Gray, President & CEO CentrePort Canada
Bram Strain, President & CEO, Business Council of Manitoba
Chuck Davidson, President & CEO, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce
Loren Remillard, President & CEO, Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce
Ron Koslowsky, Divisional Vice-President, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters Manitoba
Lanny McInnis, President, Manitoba Homebuilders Association
Nicole Chabot, Chair, Manitoba Heavy Construction Association
Board of Directors, Western Canada Roadbuilders & Heavy Construction Association (WCR&HCA)



January 21, 2021

Hon. Jim Carr
Minister, Special Representative for the Prairies
jim.carr@parl.gc.ca

Subject: '*Western Canada Trade Gateways and Corridors Program*' - supporting Canada's economic and security interests

Dear Minister Carr,

The undersigned organizations represent a broad cross-section of Manitoba's economy. We believe that growing the economy is each government's # 1 priority without which, it is moot to speak of funding our globally envied social programs.

We seek your political leadership as Special Representative for the Prairies in the federal Cabinet. We ask you to champion development of a sustained '*Western Canada Trade Gateway and Corridors Program*' which incents public/private trade investment across Western Canada, to advance the region's and our country's economic and security interests.

We see this initiative within the spirit of the Prime Minister's January 15, 2021 mandate letter¹ in which he asks you to "*Actively foster a vision for the Prairies as a destination for talent, international investment and trade, including to promote Western Canada internationally ... to expand and diversify export markets for agricultural and agri-food businesses and natural resources.*"

Our gateways and trade corridors include marine, road, rail, and air modes supporting freight and passenger flows of regional and national significance for international commerce. The program objective would be to support economic revival in Western Canada post pandemic, to improve our domestic competitiveness in world markets harnessing the ROI of trade, and in the process, promote our national security interests.

The program could fund projects which²:

- align Western Canada's major transportation systems with our key global commerce opportunities

¹ We also reference the supportive mandate letters for Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance; Hon. Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure & Communities; Hon. Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs; and Hon. Omar Alghabra, Minister of Transportation.

² Manitoba projects could include realizing Churchill as Canada's northern trade gateway; CentrePort Canada, Canada's first inland port and in particular the Chief Peguis Trail extension to help realize on the '*better faster cheaper*' connection to global trade offered by CentrePort Canada which has already attracted more than \$1 billion in private sector investment; the Emerson border crossing to the United States; South Perimeter improvements which support Manitoba's regional, domestic, continental and global trade role.

- will carry regionally significant and growing levels of trade, based on empirical evidence and analysis
- support regional and global trade connectivity
- enable the system to withstand the impacts of climate change and adapt to new technologies and innovation; and
- partner with and draw investment from sub-national governments and the private sector

Economic revival is Canada's priority. The return to prosperity, however, will not be fully realized without a sustained and strategic trade gateway and corridor investment strategy.

Canada's economy is highly dependent on international trade. Exports directly and indirectly accounted for 2,942,400 jobs in Canada in 2011 according to Statistics Canada, or 16.7% of all employment. Canada's trade-to-GDP ratio was just shy of 65% in 2019, a relatively consistent annual share of Canada's economic activity.

Given our economy's historical and projected reliance on trade, the investments we make will pay dividends for years to come. They will deliver sustained economic growth, build stronger communities, all while creating well-paying jobs for Canadians.

It will take years for Canada's economy to rebound not just from COVID impacts, but protectionist policies of our largest trade partner and China's weaponization of trade. The threats continue with the growth of China's global economic footprint and the Biden administration's promotion of 'Buy America'.

Canada must prepare for future global trade disruption while recognizing opportunities arising from crisis. Most immediately, Canada must prepare to exploit the global pent up trade potential when the pandemic shutdown lifts.

Canada recognizes the imperatives of global trade to our domestic economic and social welfare by pursuing and signing international trade agreements including Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA); Canada-European Union: Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA); and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Domestically, Canada's recognition of the critical need for modern trade gateway and corridor transportation infrastructure to support our global trade profile is reflected in our nation-building investment programs: Asia Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative; the National Policy Framework for Strategic Gateways and Trade Corridors; the Ontario-Quebec Continental Gateway; and, the Atlantic Gateway & Trade Corridor, to name but a few.

These and like programs helped elevate Canada's global reputation. By 2008-09, Canada was ranked 10th globally in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index for transportation infrastructure reliability. However, with reduced investment programs, as of 2019 Canada's reliability reputation precipitously dropped to 32nd³.

Now is the time to recapitalize investment to drive the region and Canada's economic growth and protect our national security interests. And Western Canada is strategically situated to help do just that. It is:

- a vast, resource-rich, value-add manufacturing region with a growing population and significant, pent-up capacity to produce the goods in demand, domestically, continentally and globally
- at 32% of Canada's population, it contributes 37% of its exports and nearly 38% of Canada's real GDP
- Western Canada's GDP per capita was \$56,000 in 2017, 18% higher than the national average.

Globally, nations will recover unevenly from the pandemic's social and economic upheaval. Canada must also be ready for the next disruptor. Our national security interest requires us to protect our trade ties, to be nimble, connected, and ready to shift our trade routes and focus.

³ World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report 2019
http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2019.pdf

Our overseas trade partners, our customers are waiting to see what Canada will offer. Western Canada can be a trade superpower, to help turn Canada into a global trade leader.

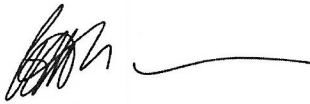
Perhaps Perrin Beatty, President of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce best made the connection when he said this: *"There is the infrastructure we want like parks and hockey rinks, the infrastructure we need like schools and hospitals, and then there is the infrastructure that pays for these things and that is trade infrastructure."*

In closing, in addition to those named below as receiving a copy, we have under separate cover copied our respective Boards of Directors.

Please direct your reply to Bram Strain, President & CEO of the Business Council of Manitoba at bstrain@businesscouncil.mb.ca our lead on this file. We look forward to your reply and an early meeting to discuss next steps options.

Yours truly,

Business Council of Manitoba



Bram Strain,
President & CEO

Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters



Ron Koslowsky,
Divisional Vice-President

Manitoba Chambers of Commerce



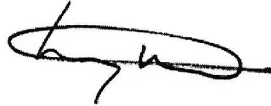
Chuck Davidson,
President & CEO

Manitoba Heavy Construction Association



Chris Lorenc, B.A., LL.B.,
President

Manitoba Home Builders Association



Lanny McInnes
President

Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce



Loren Remillard
President & CEO

cc. Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
Hon. Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure & Communities
Hon. Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs
Hon. Omar Alghabra, Minister of Transportation
Hon. Brian Pallister, Premier, Province of Manitoba
His Worship, Mayor Brian Bowman, Mayor, City of Winnipeg
Perrin Beatty, President, Canadian Chamber of Commerce
Dennis Darby, President, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters
Diane Gray, President & CEO CentrePort Canada

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February 8th, 2021

Honourable Jim Carr
Minister, Special Representative for the Prairies
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Canada

Subject: Western Canada Trade Gateways and Corridors Program - supporting Canada's economic and security interests

Dear Minister Carr,

As a former member of our Board of Directors I know that you are well aware of the Canada West Foundation and will appreciate the alignment of our work with your new portfolio. In your capacity as Minister for the Prairies, we are pleased to offer our support to you on a range of issues for Western Canada as we continue our efforts to advance work that you helped to lead at CWF.

Amongst the priorities that we know will compete for your attention, there is one recently presented for your consideration to which CWF would like to add its voice: the proposed Western Canada Trade Gateways and Corridors Program.

Trade infrastructure is critical for Canada and for the west in particular. It is an area where CWF has done extensive work with the western provinces and the federal government. This work has included roundtables with industry think tanks and former Transport Minister Sohi, and summits of the New West Partnership premiers, including a pending summit in Winnipeg. In this extensive work is much that ties directly into your mandate and presents complimentary objectives that unite western provincial governments, your cabinet colleagues, and your government.

How the Government addresses trade and the quality of Canada's trade corridors that move goods, people, and money to and from international markets will be a major determinant of the competitiveness of Canada's export-based economy. This issue is obviously not limited to Western Canada. The health of our trade corridors and the ability of Canadian businesses to compete internationally, is a national priority which is fundamental to Canada's post-pandemic recovery, and will sustain and create jobs for the future economic prosperity of the country.

CWF, together with industry and others in the think tank community, are currently leveraging our seven (7) years of collective research on trade corridor best practices to outline a plan to advance the dialogue beyond problem statements and propose sustainable improvements to Canada's trade infrastructure performance. Our work is being supported by a coalition that includes amongst others, the Business Council of Canada, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Construction Association, Western Road Builders, and Canpotex.

We look forward to engaging with you on this and other important policy matters that can be of value to you in your new portfolio.

Sincerely,



Gary G. Mar, QC
President & CEO
Canada West Foundation

c. via email

- Hon. Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure & Communities
- Hon. Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs
- Hon. Omar Alghabra, Minister of Transportation
- Hon. Brian Pallister, Premier, Province of Manitoba
- His Worship, Mayor Brian Bowman, Mayor, City of Winnipeg
- Perrin Beatty, President, Canadian Chamber of Commerce
- Goldy Hyder, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Business Council of Canada
- Bram Strain, President and Chief Executive Officer Business Council of Manitoba
- Mary Van Buren, President, Canadian Construction Association
- Chris Lorenc, Manitoba Heavy Construction Association

February 19, 2020

Honourable Jim Carr
Minister, Special Representative for the Prairies
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Canada

Subject: Western Canada Trade Gateways and Corridors Program – supporting Canada’s economic and security interests

Dear Minister Carr,

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister for the Prairies. Your returning voice will be a welcome addition in Cabinet discussions.

The Canadian Construction Association (CCA), which speaks for the vertical and horizontal construction industry across Canada representing more than 20,000 companies, champions growing the economy as a key priority for every level of government and harnessing strategic investment in infrastructure to achieve that goal.

Investing in trade, a key mainstay in generating economic activity, wealth and jobs in our country, is an area that would benefit from focused federal leadership.

To that end, CCA lends its voice to a growing call for renewed priority and recapitalization of trade-enabling infrastructure investment programs. This is a priority across Canada, but particularly in Western provinces.

Without the past public investments made in trade transportation infrastructure – our roads and bridges that allowed our shelves to be stocked and food to be delivered to our doors during the pandemic – we would have certainly been worse off.

For all these reasons, CCA endorses the Canada West Foundation’s (CWF) call upon the Government of Canada to create a vision and policy framework for investment in our trade gateways and corridors, and to commit to implement a Western Canada Gateways and Corridors Program.

For your convenience, we attach the February 8, 2021 letter on the topic to you from CWF President and CEO Gary Mar, , endorsing an attached January 21 letter to you from six leading Manitoba business organizations.



Canadian Construction
Association
Association canadienne
de la construction

More than 65 per cent of Canada's GDP is drawn from trade activity, domestically, continentally, and globally. Western provinces are similarly economically dependent on trade.

How the federal government addresses trade and the quality of Canada's trade corridors that move goods, people, and money to and from international markets will be a major determinant of the competitiveness of Canada's export-based economy. Supporting a strong, efficient and reliable trade-transportation network goes hand-in-hand with championing open, unfettered trade among nations and between provinces to secure our country's prosperity in the immediate and long-term.

The health of our trade corridors and the ability of Canadian businesses to compete internationally is a national priority which is fundamental to Canada's post-pandemic recovery.

We look forward to engaging with you on this and other important policy matters that can be of value to you in your new portfolio.

Sincerely,

Mary Van Buren
President, CCA

C.C. (via email):

Hon. Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure & Communities
Hon. Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs
Hon. Omar Alghabra, Minister of Transport
Hon. Brian Pallister, Premier, Province of Manitoba
His Worship, Mayor Brian Bowman, Mayor, City of Winnipeg
Perrin Beatty, President, Canadian Chamber of Commerce
Goldy Hyder, President & Chief Executive Officer of the Business Council of Canada
Bram Strain, President & Chief Executive Officer, Business Council of Manitoba
Gary Mar, President & Chief Executive Officer, Canada West Foundation
Chris Lorenc, President, Manitoba Heavy Construction Association

Enclosure:

Letter from Gary Mar, President & CEO, Canada West Foundation to the Hon. Jim Carr, February 8, 2021.



Canadian
Chamber of
Commerce
Chambre de
Commerce
du Canada

The Voice of Canadian Business™
Le porte-parole des entreprises canadiennes^{MD}

Via email: Jim.Carr@parl.gc.ca

April 6, 2021

Honourable James Carr, P.C., M.P.
Special Representative for the Prairies
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON

Dear Minister Carr:

As Canada's largest business association, the Canadian Chamber and our members know firsthand the significant impact Canada's trade-enabling infrastructure has on attracting investment, enhancing job creation and growth and contributing to economic prosperity.

This is especially true in Western Canada, where a number of regional chambers are pursuing the Western Canada Trade Gateway & Corridor Initiative (WCTG&CI) to secure targeted infrastructure funding for the vast Canadian western provinces, businesses, and communities that support the development of and access to markets in Canada's mid-west.

Given the potential opportunities for growth that can be achieved through increased investment the region, the Canadian Chamber supports the creation of the WCTG&CI.

As you will be aware, the Canadian Chamber remains a strong supporter of the recapitalization of the National Trade Corridor Fund. We also support the Canada Infrastructure Bank and continue to encourage our members to look to the Bank to promote public-private partnerships. However, these vital initiatives need not exclude targeted initiatives like WCTG&CI, which can work in parallel to achieve complementary objectives.

We hope that the Government of Canada will consider the potential benefits of the WCTG&CI for both the Western Canadian economy and the broader supply chain of Canadian businesses that will benefit from getting their products to market. This initiative can play a crucial role in supporting our economic recovery.

Sincerely,

Perrin Beatty P.C., O.C.
President and Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Chamber of Commerce

Office of the President and Chief Executive Officer | Cabinet du président et chef de la direction

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