



Western Canada Roadbuilders & Heavy  
Construction Association (WCR&HCA)  
Unit #3-1680 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3H 0Z2

June 24, 2021

The Honourable Brian Pallister  
Premier of Manitoba  
Room 204, Legislative Building  
450 Broadway  
Winnipeg, MB, R3C 0V8

**Re: Recapitalizing National Trade Gateway & Corridor Initiatives**

Premier Pallister,

The Western Canada Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association (WCR&HCA) <http://wcrhca.com/> congratulates you on assuming the role as chair of Canada's Premiers and the Council of the Federation (Council) for 2021-22. We look forward to your leadership, as a steadfast supporter of the free movement of goods, services and labour across provincial borders and a champion of strategic trade-enabling infrastructure investment programs.

WCR&HCA, formed in 1943, is composed of the western roadbuilder organizations: British Columbia Road Builders & Heavy Construction Association, Alberta Roadbuilders & Heavy Construction Association, Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association and Manitoba Heavy Construction Association. To support Canada's economic growth and advance investment via trade-enabling infrastructure, WCR&HCA works with a number of stakeholder organizations.

WCR&HCA encourages you to lead the Council in supporting a call for a significant recapitalization of the federal trade infrastructure investment program, rejuvenating trade gateways and corridors initiatives in Canada's regions.

**Context**

Top-most on the agenda of the Council is national and provincial economic revival, building back from the deep deficits left in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic economic shutdown.

As you are aware, infrastructure, in particular nation-building projects that elevate trade competitiveness, is foundational to economic recovery and sustainable growth. Trade constituted 66% of Canada's GDP in 2019 (61% in 2020 due to the pandemic). The attached statistics prepared by the Canada West Foundation show trade is consistently important to all of Canada's regions. The data illustrate provincial, regional and therefore national interests are served by a sustained, robust investment strategy in trade gateways & corridors of national significance.

A strategic, long-term investment plan for trade gateways and corridors is Canada's path to protecting our national economic and security interests as new opportunities, challenges and threats emerge, and to ensuring our communities, services and businesses are resilient to the challenges of climate change.

Trade fuels economic growth, generating the revenues governments require to support the breadth of our vital social programs and critical services: health care, education, housing, recreation and cultural.

**The Way Forward - Trade Gateways and Corridors**

Canada's past recognition of the importance of modern trade gateway and corridor infrastructure is illustrated by previous nation-building investment programs: the Asia Pacific Gateway & Corridor Initiative (APGCI); the National Policy Framework for Strategic Gateways & Trade Corridors; the Ontario-Quebec Continental Gateway; and, the Atlantic Gateway & Trade Corridor. All regions have benefited from trade gateway and corridor investment.

The success of well-planned, strategic trade corridors investment is documented. Investors and markets noticed the investment commitment, and Canada's global reputation benefitted. In 2008-09, Canada was ranked 10th in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index for transportation infrastructure reliability.

However, with the expiry of programs like APGCI, by 2019 Canada's reliability reputation precipitously dropped to 32<sup>nd</sup>, as documented by the Global Competitiveness Report (2019).

This is a critical time to renew our commitment to nation-building infrastructure projects. The trade potential residing within our new trade agreements – focusing on emerging Eastern and European markets – cannot be realized without a new trade-transportation infrastructure policy framework.

WCR&HCA has called upon the Government of Canada to renew the national trade policy framework and recapitalize the national trade corridor investment program.

For our region, we propose the Western Canada Trade Gateways & Corridors Initiative (WCTG&CI). Western Canada, our country's port to a vast, untapped Asian market, is indispensable to Canada's trade profile and productivity and, therefore, its economic health and prosperity. Similar programs also make sense for Ontario/Quebec and Maritimes.

Such regional programs connected to national benefit would invest in projects that incent domestic and foreign investment in trade-enabling, value-added commerce of the region, including the needs of Canada's North. It would support Canada's trade agreement goals to diversify our global markets, help shield the economy from over reliance on any single market and mitigate against the weaponizing of trade by large-market jurisdictions.

#### Summary

The WCR&HCA encourages you, Premier Pallister, to champion as the new Chair of the Council of the Federation a call upon the federal government to significantly recapitalize its nation-building infrastructure investment program and, working with the provinces and private sector, rejuvenate strategic investment in trade gateways and corridors.

Investment in our country's trade gateways and corridors would signal that Canada is investing in itself, is confident it has what the world wants, can deliver and can compete globally for greater shares of international trade.

It would signal to Canadians that our federal government understands its central responsibility and role in supporting good jobs, creating opportunity, securing economic prosperity and protecting our national security interests.

Sincerely,

Western Canada Roadbuilder & Heavy Construction Association



Greg Orbanski, B.A., CET  
WCR&HCA Chair



Chris Lorenc, B.A., LL.B.,  
WCR&HCA President

cc.

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Hon. Jason Kenney, Premier, Alberta  
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