



July 20, 2026

The Honourable Steven MacKinnon, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons
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(submitted via email to TC.engagement.TC@tc.gc.ca)

Re: *Strengthening One Canadian Economy Through Trade and Transportation discussion paper*

Dear Minister MacKinnon,

Since 1920, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce has been the Voice of Business in Saskatchewan. Supported by provincial businesses, professional associations, and local Chambers of Commerce. The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce welcomes the opportunity to provide input on the Government of Canada's *Strengthening One Canadian Economy Through Trade and Transportation discussion paper* and commends the federal government for its focus on improving the efficiency, resilience, and competitiveness of Canada's trade and transportation system. Saskatchewan is a highly export-oriented province, with sectors such as mining, energy, and agriculture that are dependent on reliable access to global markets. Across these sectors, the central challenge is not production capacity or global demand, but rather the ability to move goods efficiently, reliably, and competitively through Canada's transportation network.

The Saskatchewan Chamber emphasizes that the federal conversation on improving major project approvals must be closely aligned with ongoing efforts to strengthen Canada's trade and transportation systems. Streamlining regulatory processes, through clear rules, enforceable timelines, and a "one project, one review, one decision" approach, is essential to ensuring that critical trade-enabling infrastructure can be built in a timely manner. Without meaningful improvements to the current regulatory framework, efforts to enhance trade and transportation will be undermined by delays and uncertainty at the project approval stage. To fully realize Canada's export potential, particularly for landlocked provinces like Saskatchewan, infrastructure, regulation, and trade cannot be treated as separate policy areas. They function



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as a single, interconnected system where infrastructure enables trade, regulation determines whether infrastructure gets built and trade outcomes depend on both. When misaligned, the system creates bottlenecks. The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce has detailed recommendations related to the regulatory process in its *Response to Getting Major Projects built in Canada – Discussion Paper on Proposed Legislative, Regulatory, and Policy Reforms*. Of significant relevancy to the trade and transportation discussion, and therefore worthy of repetition, is the Saskatchewan Chamber's recommendation to amend the Impact Assessment Act (IAA) to expand or remove thresholds associated with construction of rail, especially on already existing and permitted mine and rail sites. Currently, the IAA requirements as prescribed are a disincentive to building out much needed trade and transport infrastructure. The Act mandates the IAA process for projects when rail construction is at or exceeds 50 kilometers in length or is over 50 hectares of land, or an expansion of a railyard of more than 50 per cent and total area of 50 hectares. Triggering the IAA in this instance leads to unnecessarily long permitting and build times and discourage larger expansion, even when needed.

Beyond the necessary improvements to the regulatory processes, if Canada is truly committed to doubling its exports beyond the U.S., trade diversification cannot remain a secondary goal. It has to become a central pillar of the country's economic competitiveness strategy. Achieving this shift demands ambition, disciplined execution, and a willingness to make difficult, sometimes politically sensitive choices.

First, public investments in infrastructure, trade programs, and export supports must be tightly aligned with how businesses actually operate and scale. A core priority is addressing critical bottlenecks in Canada's most important trade corridors, particularly those connecting Saskatchewan to West Coast export gateways. The Vancouver corridor is of national importance, yet it is constrained by key choke points. Saskatchewan exporters have identified specific, named bottlenecks at the Port of Vancouver including the Second Narrows Bridge, Thornton tunnel, anchorage constraints, and overall rail access limitations. This results in lost export opportunities and reduced economic returns. Addressing these issues will require targeted, high-impact investments in core infrastructure. Ensuring that funding programs are accessible and aligned with industry needs is essential, particularly for projects that directly increase export capacity and system performance.



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At the same time, improvements to physical infrastructure must be matched by stronger system-wide coordination. Canada's trade corridors currently operate as fragmented systems, where railways, ports, terminals, and shippers are not always aligned in planning or operations. This misalignment leads to situations where capacity exists in one part of the system but cannot be utilized due to constraints elsewhere. The Chamber supports the development of a more integrated, corridor-based approach, including the designation of National Trade Corridors supported by clear governance structures and coordination. Bringing together federal and provincial governments, Indigenous partners, industry, ports, and railways through formal corridor governance mechanisms would improve alignment on infrastructure planning and investment decisions. Beyond regulatory and coordination considerations, the overall reliability of Canada's trade system must also be strengthened. Reliability must be treated as a core trade enabler. Targeted action to ensure labour stability, coupled with investments in strategic infrastructure, will position Canada to seize emerging opportunities, diversify export markets, and reinforce its reputation as a dependable trading partner.

Additionally, Canada must concentrate its efforts where its industries have a clear, defensible advantage and a realistic pathway to growth. Rather than spreading resources thinly across numerous regions, a targeted approach, grounded in sector strengths, demand trends, and competitive positioning, will yield stronger outcomes. As such, the Saskatchewan Chamber advises that any strategy to improve Canada's trade network incorporates Saskatchewan's northern region, particularly areas such as the Athabasca Basin. Rich in critical minerals and home to major existing and proposed mining developments, this region has the potential to play a pivotal role in advancing Canada's economic security, energy security, and global competitiveness. However, realizing this opportunity depends on transportation networks capable of supporting industrial-scale activity. Unfortunately, the current state of northern transportation infrastructure presents a significant barrier. Roads are often not designed for heavy or sustained commercial traffic, bridge capacity is limited, and weight restrictions or washouts routinely force costly detours or require additional trucking capacity, undermining efficiency and increasing costs. The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Canada to place greater emphasis on Northern Saskatchewan within its trade and transportation considerations.

The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce applauds the Government of Canada's efforts to advance paperless trade through modernized laws and



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regulations. Continued reliance on paper-based processes creates avoidable delays, increases administrative costs, and heightens the risk of errors and shipment disruptions. Accelerating the transition to digital systems will enhance efficiency, reduce friction at borders, and strengthen Canada's competitiveness in global trade.

At the same time, removing structural barriers to market access remains essential to fully realizing these gains. The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce recommends repealing the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act to restore access to the northern British Columbia coast. This change would enable Canadian energy exports to reach Asian markets more efficiently and competitively.

While Canada's economic success depends on transportation systems that connect regional economies to global markets, federal efforts across trade corridors, infrastructure, supply chains, and economic development remain fragmented. Current strategies have focused too specifically on individual segments without aligning the broader network of programs and agencies that shape economic outcomes. The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce therefore recommends establishing a long-term 25-year National Export Infrastructure Plan to align federal transportation, infrastructure, supply chain, and regional development strategies under a unified direction.

In closing, the Saskatchewan business community is encouraged by the federal government's commitment to enhancing Canada's trade and transportation systems and is optimistic that this consultation will result in a framework that ensures Saskatchewan commodities reach global markets efficiently. The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce urges the federal government to incorporate the following recommendations to strengthen competitiveness, reliability, and long-term economic growth.

1. Improve regulatory performance in alignment with the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce's *Response to Getting Major Projects built in Canada – Discussion Paper on Proposed Legislative, Regulatory, and Policy Reforms*.
2. Amend the IAA Physical Activities Regulations to expand or remove thresholds associated with construction of rail, especially on already existing and permitted mine and rail sites.
3. Prioritize addressing critical bottlenecks in Canada's most important trade corridors, particularly those connecting Saskatchewan to West Coast export gateways.



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4. Continue development of a more integrated, corridor-based approach, including the designation of National Trade Corridors supported by clear governance structures and coordination.
5. Strengthen the overall reliability of Canada's trade system by enhancing mechanisms to ensure labour stability.
6. Place greater emphasis on Northern Saskatchewan within trade and transportation considerations.
7. Expedite efforts to advance paperless trade through modernized laws and regulations
8. Repeal the Oil Tanker Moratorium
9. Establish a 25-year National Export Infrastructure Plan

Sincerely,

Prabha Ramaswamy, CEO
Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce