



CHATHAM-KENT
CHAMBER *of*
COMMERCE

Media Release

January 24, 2025

THE CHATHAM-KENT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BRINGS A MESSAGE OF STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE

As we face this new chapter in Canada-U.S. relations, your Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce and our nation stand ready to engage proactively, protect our interests, and contribute to a prosperous North American economy. With strategic foresight and a commitment to our values, we are not only weathering the current political storm but poised to emerge stronger and more resilient in the global marketplace.

“While challenges are undoubtedly present, Chatham -Kents’s economic fundamentals remain strong. Our diverse economy, skilled workforce, and strategic resources position us well to navigate the new trade landscape. By focusing on innovation, strengthening our competitiveness, and articulating our shared values around the world, we are turning potential challenges into opportunities for growth and collaboration.” - **B.J. Griffiths, Chair, Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce.**

As a Chambers of Commerce, we understand the concerns of business from agriculture to automotive, and the supply chains that feed them. The potential 25% tariff proposed by U.S. President Donald Trump and the rhetoric around challenging the sovereignty of Canada is a situation that is undoubtedly challenging and unsettling, but there are several reasons for our businesses to remain confident and optimistic in the future:

Economic Resilience

Canadian businesses have demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of past economic challenges. Our diverse economy and strong trade relationships beyond the United States provide a buffer against potential disruptions.

United Response

The Canadian government, provincial leaders, and business organizations like your local Chamber of Commerce are presenting a united front in response to this threat. This coordinated approach strengthens our negotiating position and demonstrates our commitment to protecting Canadian interests.

Potential for Internal Growth

For years the Chamber of Commerce has been encouraging the government of Canada to remove interprovincial trade barriers and unlock the economic prosperity lying dormant in these archaic policies. This situation presents an opportunity to address long-standing interprovincial trade barriers and by removing them boost Canada's economy by up to \$200 billion per year, potentially offsetting the impact of U.S. tariffs.

Mutual Economic Interests

It's important to remember that the proposed tariffs would also significantly harm the U.S. economy. American businesses and consumers would face higher costs and reduced competitiveness, which could lead to pressure on the U.S. administration to reconsider this approach. The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce is leading this conversation across the U.S. Chamber network.

Time for Preparation

With the proposed tariffs not set to take effect until February 2025, there is time for diplomatic efforts and for businesses to prepare contingency plans as we work our business contacts and channels to influence key stakeholders in the U.S.

Leveraging Canadian Assets

Canada continues to highlight its valuable assets that are strategically important to the U.S., including:

- Energy resources
- Critical minerals
- Nuclear power capabilities
- AI research excellence
- Lumber and building materials
- Automotive
- Agriculture

By emphasizing these assets, Canada is demonstrating that doing business with us is not just beneficial but strategically smarter than alternatives.

Government Support

The Canadian government has a track record of supporting businesses during trade disputes. We can expect measures to be put in place to assist affected industries if the tariffs are implemented.

What is your Chamber Doing

In the fall of 2024 Mr. Ring, President & CEO hosted the Canadian Ambassador to the United States, Kristen Hillman at the US based Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) Board of Directors. ACCE serves more than 9,000 leaders from 1,300 chambers of commerce, including 93 of the top 100 metro areas in the U.S. and hundreds of other businesses and organizations, like convention and visitors' bureaus and economic development organizations. The combined membership of ACCE chambers in the U.S. exceeds 1.2 million businesses and connects our main streets across the continent.

"Engaging with our American partners is essential for fostering a prosperous economic future. Through connecting our communities to the realities of our integrated supply chains, the potential of our strategic alliance and that as we look ahead to the 2026 CUSMA review, it's crucial that we advocate for policies that benefit both nations while addressing emerging global challenges." - **Rory Ring, CEO & President of the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce.**

The Chamber is in the planning stage of a Canada Trade Pavillion at the annual Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) conference in Philadelphia this summer to bring a message of economic unity and strength and a good dose of the trillion-dollar reality.

The Canada-U.S. economic relationship continues to be a powerhouse, with approximately \$3.6 billion in goods and services crossing the border daily. This translates to an annual economic stake of over \$1 trillion for both nations. In Ontario alone, the daily cross-border trade amounts to about \$1 billion. These staggering figures underscore the critical importance of preserving a strong and open trading relationship.

While the situation is serious, it's crucial to maintain perspective and focus on the strengths of Canadian businesses. By working together, adapting to changing circumstances, and exploring new opportunities, we can navigate this challenge and emerge stronger. The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce remains committed to advocating for the interests of our business community and supporting you through this uncertain period.

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About Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce:

The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce serves as the recognized voice of visionary leadership for over 350 members and businesses in the Chatham-Kent community. Their mission is to champion business excellence by encouraging business relations, integrating business with the community, and fostering entrepreneurship. They aim to enhance economic prosperity and quality of life for local businesses. You can find them at 54 Fourth St, Chatham, ON N7M 2G21. For inquiries, you can reach them at (519) 352-7540 or via email at info@chatham-kentchamber.ca.