

January 23, 2020

Dear Federal Party Leaders,

Subject: Ratification of the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA)

The first North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was a standout success story in promoting the integration of the North American economy of which Canadian business and consumers were key beneficiaries. Canadian exports to the United States post-NAFTA more than tripled and 75% of all Canadian exports of goods and services still go south of the border, supporting Canadian business growth. Despite fears at the time of the demise of the manufacturing sector, it instead heralded a new age of cross border supply chains, with Canadian companies playing a central role.

The successful negotiation of CUSMA was the single most important trade priority for Canada, supported by industry and labour groups across the political spectrum and international borders. All parties must work together to ratify the agreement as quickly as possible and bring stability for Canadian business and investment.

In a time of trade tension, CUSMA is a strong signal of international cooperation and commitment to free trade. It will provide much-needed predictability for businesses to operate and invest in their future.

As the past year has shown, trade uncertainty negatively impacts business investment and, as a result, economic growth. It would be reckless for Canadian politicians from any party to fuel this uncertainty by stalling the ratification of CUSMA.

It is right that the government and all parties listen to industries, sectors, and communities who will be impacted by the further opening up of trade, and that they take steps to support them to become more competitive or seize new opportunities. But this concern should not threaten the wider gains to Canadian businesses and consumers that CUSMA offers.

The business community is looking to all party leaders and members to come together and support the ratification of Canada's most important trade deal.

Sincerely,

Patrick Sullivan
Chair, Canadian Global Cities Council and
President & CEO, Halifax Chamber of Commerce

Cc: Michel Leblanc, President & CEO, Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal (Vice-Chair)
Jan De Silva, President & CEO, Toronto Region Board of Trade (Past-Chair)
Bridgitte Anderson, President & CEO, Greater Vancouver Board of Trade
Dr. Sandip Lalli, President & CEO, Calgary Chamber of Commerce
Todd Letts, CEO, Brampton Board of Trade
Janet M. Riopel, President & CEO, Edmonton Chamber of Commerce
Loren Remillard, President & CEO, Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 2015, The Canadian Global Cities Council (CGCC) is a coalition of CEOs of eight of Canada's largest urban Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade coast-to-coast: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Brampton, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax. Representing half of Canada's GDP and population, the CGCC is a strong voice for national policies that build competitive and sustainable urban economies.