

OTTAWA REPORT

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Breaking-down barriers to interprovincial trade

Trade is vital to Canada's economy and to the well-being of all of us.

To support economic growth and Canadian prosperity, our government has committed to an ambitious international trade strategy and we have been very successful. However, progress on domestic trade has not always kept pace. We are also working here at home to eliminate domestic regulation that leads to increased and unnecessary costs for our businesses which, in turn, limits growth and job creation.

One Canada, One National Economy: Modernizing Internal Trade in Canada is a plan that lays out a broad proposal to remove barriers to internal trade and guiding principles for modernizing the current Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT). Eliminating internal trade barriers would create jobs, boost economic growth and strengthen Canada's internal market by helping to move goods and services more freely across Canada. As Canada signs on to more international agreements we must ensure that Canadian companies have the same opportunities here at home. Visit www.ic.gc.ca/internaltrade to learn more.

Improving Food Safety

Health Minister Rona Ambrose has announced new labelling requirements for mechanically tenderized beef (MTB).

The new labels will emphasize the importance of cooking MTB to a minimum internal temperature of 63°C (145°F) and turning over mechanically tenderized steaks at least twice during cooking to kill harmful bacteria that can cause food poisoning. Mechanical tenderization of meat is a common practice used by the food industry to improve the tenderness and flavour of beef by using needles or blades to break down muscle fibres. This regulatory change applies to all industry sectors selling uncooked MTB to other industry members or consumers. This includes, but is not limited to, grocery retailers, butcher shops, meat processors, and importers of MTB. As part of its commitment to promoting food safety, Health Canada also released new industry guidelines to improve safe cooking and handling information on packaged raw ground meat and raw ground poultry products sold in Canada. To be used by retailers, processors and importers who choose to include food safety information on their products, the guidelines provide standards on what information and symbols to include on the label to boost consumer recognition and uptake, and how the label should be formatted and placed on ground meat packages so that it can be easily seen by consumers.

These changes are another step in our government's commitment to make certain that consumers have the food safety information they need.

Consultation on the Future of TV

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has launched an online discussion forum for Canadians to have their final say on the future of the television system. The forum will be open until September 19 - the final day of the public hearing on Let's Talk TV: A Conversation with Canadians. To help focus comments, the CRTC has also published a working document for discussion that outlines some of the issues to be considered during the public hearing.

The CRTC is seeking to ensure that the television system fosters choice and flexibility in the selection of channels, encourages the creation of compelling and diverse programs and empowers Canadians to make informed choices and have recourse in the case of disputes with their television service providers. To participate, visit

<http://consultation.crtc.gc.ca/en/consultation/19/help-shape-future-tv-canada>.

Fitch Reaffirms Canada's Triple-A Rating

Fitch Ratings has reaffirmed its triple-A rating of Canada, with a stable outlook. The Canadian economy has posted one of the strongest job creation records in the Group of Seven (G-7) over the recovery, with more than 1.1 million jobs created since July 2009. Real gross domestic product is significantly above pre-recession levels - the best performance in the G-7. According to KPMG, Canada's total business tax costs are the lowest in the G-7 and 46% lower than those in the United States.

Canada has weathered the economic storm well and the world has noticed:

Both the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development expect Canada to be among the strongest growing economies in the G-7 over this year and next;

For the sixth year in a row, the World Economic Forum rated Canada's banking system as the world's soundest; and In 2013, Canada leapt from sixth to second place in Bloomberg's ranking of the most attractive destinations for business. Three credit rating agencies?Moody's Investors Service, Fitch Ratings and Standard & Poor's?have reaffirmed their top ratings for Canada, reminding us that Canada is an island of stability in an uncertain global economy.

If you would like to contact me on any issue, please call 905-953-7515 or visit my website at www.loisbrown.ca. I look forward to hearing from you.