



NEWS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release*

"Let's Solve 'Buy American' Once and For All" Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Supports Efforts to Fight Protectionism

Lethbridge, June 24, 2009 At its June Board meeting, the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors expressed its support for efforts by the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to pursue bilateral discussions with the United States to ensure that companies from both countries can bid on government procurement contracts.

While we continue to support the efforts of the U.S. Chamber to ease the existing restrictions, 'Buy American' provisions in the U.S. stimulus package have shut out Canadian companies from \$280 billion worth of state- and municipal-level government procurement opportunities in the United States. More disturbing still is that similar rules are being included in other pieces of legislation before the U.S. Congress.

"The joint efforts by the federal, provincial, and territorial governments are a first step to securing Canadian companies' access to the U.S. market now and in the future. We need to move urgently at the highest level to reach agreement between Canada and the United States," said Paul Pharo, President Elect of the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce.

Despite the understandable calls to retaliate against U.S. protectionism, a trade war between our two countries would make matters worse. The Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce supports a rules-based procurement deal with the United States to prevent that possibility.

"Everyone loses in a trade war. In this end, we all stand to gain from vibrant and open competition that results in best products and prices. We need to keep our borders open and make sure taxpayers in both countries get the very best value for every dollar," noted Pharo.

Contact:

Paul Pharo, President Elect

Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce

Phone: 403-328-5576 E-mail: pgpharo@stringam.ca