



Gary Mar, Q.C.
Minister Counsellor
Government of Alberta
Canadian Embassy
501 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20001

February 9, 2009

Dear Mr. Mar:

I am writing to express the concern of the Board of Directors of the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce respecting broadening of "Buy American" provisions found within the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act before Congress.

We are concerned that if "Buy American" becomes embedded in Congressional economic stimulus legislation, the United States will lose its moral authority to pressure others not to introduce protectionist policies at the World Trade Organization and in regional or bilateral trade relationships. A rush of protectionist actions could recreate an economic downward spiral such as seen in the 1930s from similar ill-advised legislation. The spillover from trade disputes and retaliatory actions at the global level will inevitably transfer across borders, negatively affecting jobs and investment in our city.

Already Lethbridge and southern Alberta have seen adverse effects from protectionist legislation enacted in the United States to cause harm in many sectors of the local economy. These policies have a continuing negative impact on business activity causing support for freer trade amongst the general public and in some interest groups to be called into question.

Businesses in Lethbridge have enough very serious challenges to manage, whether it is rapidly fluctuating and unstable commodity prices, gyrations in foreign exchange markets, or responding to the recent downturn in the world economy. They do not need additional layers of international political instability added to the mix.

The impact of proposed "Buy American" rules is not limited to a single province or city in Canada. It is an Alberta and Lethbridge issue also.

We ask you to work closely with the Embassy of Canada to influence Congressional leaders and supportive groups in drawing attention to the net negative results of this ill advised measure.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dennis Hatt".

Dennis Hatt
President and Chair of the Board
Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce
DH/ac

cc: Mr. Tristan Sanregret, Director, Alberta Office in Washington, DC
Hon. Perrin Beatty, President and CEO, Canadian Chamber of Commerce