

Canadian Council for Indigenous Business Statement in Reaction to U.S. Tariffs

Feb. 2, 2025 - Canadian Council for Indigenous Business is deeply disappointed by the recent tariffs imposed on Canada by the United States under the administration of President Donald Trump. Long before the U.S. and Canada were established, Indigenous peoples traded across Turtle Island. The long-standing principles of the Jay Treaty of 1794 affirm the rights of Indigenous peoples to freely cross the Canada-U.S. border for trade and commerce. While the treaty has not been recognized formally to its word, its spirit remains critical to the economic self-determination of Indigenous nations on both sides of the border. These tariffs will create economic instability on both sides of the border, and we are very concerned about the disproportionate impact they will have on Indigenous businesses and communities.

CCIB President and CEO Tabatha Bull will remain a highly active participant in the Prime Minister's Council on Canada-U.S. Relations to advocate for the interests of Indigenous businesses, workers, families and communities.

CCIB will:

- Continue to advocate for:
 - Continued recognition of the Jay Treaty, UNDRIP and Section 35 of the Constitution.
 - Enabling new trade opportunities and removing barriers to trade both interprovincially and globally.
 - Government supports that meet the unique needs of Indigenous businesses and workers.
 - Increased access to capital for Indigenous businesses.
 - Infrastructure investments to enable businesses in Indigenous communities to have equitable access to participate in commerce and trade.
 - Early engagement, requirement of consent and support to enable equity participation in infrastructure and resource development occurring on the traditional territory of Indigenous communities.
- Disseminate essential information and updates to members through various platforms and events including access to industry-specific government supports and information around the submission of requests for remission of tariffs.
- Emphasize to our corporate members and all levels of government the importance of purchasing Indigenous-owned products and services.
- Continue to collect information and data from our members, with their permission, regarding their experiences, concerns and solutions in regard to tariff impacts and strategies.
- Remain actively engaged with media outlets to keep Indigenous business interests at the forefront, and with the permission of our members, will refer journalists to Indigenous business members across the country to amplify their voices.

- Double our efforts to ensure Canadian corporations and Canadians understand that Indigenous inclusion must continue – it is not a political trend, but a legal obligation and an economic opportunity. While we continue to focus on the impact of tariffs and trade, we are keenly aware of the changing political discourse in the U.S. with respect to DEI and Supplier Diversity.

Indigenous businesses are increasingly active in export markets to the U.S. and are more active in highly impacted areas such as oil and gas, forestry and mining. The impact of economic downturns on Indigenous businesses and workers in affected sectors, combined with the high rate of food insecurity, inadequate infrastructure and rate of poverty experienced by Indigenous communities will lead to disproportionate consequences for Indigenous businesses, peoples and communities. Indigenous businesses already face higher challenges due to existing legal and historic exclusions. Tariffs and a trade war risk amplifying challenges such as access to financial services and capital. CCIB invites all partners, allies and friends to join us in our efforts to ensure that mistakes of the past are not repeated and Indigenous people have a position of influence and strength in economic decision-making at the highest levels.