

Canada Policy Adviser Offers Update on Beyond the Border Action Plan

Caron Wilson, policy adviser with Canada's Privy Council Office, shared details on the Beyond the Border Action Plan between the United States and Canada during an International Roundtable at the California Chamber of Commerce on July 31.

U.S.-Canada Relationship

Wilson explained that the flow of people, goods and services across the shared border is unmatched anywhere. The United States and Canada enjoy the largest bilateral trade and investment relationship in the world (\$1.2 trillion).

Canada-U.S. bilateral trade in goods and services surpassed \$742.8 billion in 2012, with \$2 billion worth of goods and services crossing the Canada-U.S. border daily. This is the equivalent of \$1.4 million traded every minute.

"Of course, Canada and the United States' relationship goes beyond trade and investment," Wilson said. "We share critical infrastructure. We share bridges and tunnels between our two countries. We share electricity grids between our two countries. Of course we share pipelines between our two countries."

Recognizing the significant economic and security relationship between the United States and Canada, President Barack Obama and Canada Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a declaration known as "Beyond the Border: A Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness" in February 2011, Wilson said.

The purpose of the declaration was "to establish a new long-term partnership furthering our shared security and further accelerating the legitimate flow of trade and travel between our countries," she said.

On December 7, 2011, after consulting with stakeholders, chambers of commerce, industry and interest groups, President Obama and Prime Minister Harper released the Beyond the Border Action Plan, which seeks to deepen the Canadian partnership with the United States and enhance mutual security, prosperity and economic competitiveness while respecting each country's sovereignty and privacy regimes.

Plan of Action

Four key areas of cooperation, which include approximately 30 specific



From left: Diana Zandberg, Consulate General of Canada; Michele Tomlinson-Wells, Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development; Caron Wilson, policy adviser, Canada Privy Council Office; CalChamber Board member Rick Fowler, president and CEO, The Community College Foundation; and Susanne Stirling, CalChamber vice president, international affairs.

initiatives, comprise the Action Plan:

- **Addressing Threats Early:** A program currently addressing this area is an immigration information sharing agreement, which allows the exchange of information between the U.S. and Canada when one of the countries has denied a visa to a foreign national.

- **Facilitating Trade, Economic Growth and Jobs:** A current pilot program has reduced cargo stop time at the border by an hour-and-a-half by removing duplicative inspections and risk assessments that are done both in Canada and in the United States. Another program, NEXUS, is designed to expedite the border clearance process for low-risk, pre-approved travelers into Canada and the United States.

- **Integrating Cross-Border Law Enforcement:** A program known as "Shiprider" allows the U.S. Coast Guard and Royal Canadian Mounted Police to share vessels when patrolling common waters.

- **Establishing Critical Infrastructure and Cybersecurity:** This includes preventing, responding to and recovering from physical and cyber disruptions of critical infrastructure, as well as strengthening cybersecurity.

Of interest to California businesses, the U.S.-Canada Border Action Plan will provide opportunities to reduce costs and wait-times of cross-border trade through initiatives related to Trusted Trader programs and business travel mobility.

California businesses are encouraged to learn more about the Border Action Plan and related opportunities for more secure and efficient flows of goods and services between the United States and Canada.

Canada has remained California's second largest export market since 2006, with a total value of almost \$17.3 billion in 2012 (11% of all California exports).

Computers and electronic products remained California's largest exports, accounting for 31% of all California exports to Canada. Exports of agricultural products and food manufactures from California to Canada grew to total almost \$3.6 billion, with transportation equipment and chemicals continuing to be strong export sectors as well.

More information on the Beyond the Border Plan is available from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, www.dhs.gov.

Staff Contact: Susanne Stirling