

Commercial Border Crossing Access

The country relies heavily on accessible transportation corridors and border services to facilitate the ever-growing economy, particularly in expanding natural resource investments, development of supply chain manufacturing and applicable service sectors. Although Alberta continues to have a very prosperous trading relationship with its neighbors in the U.S. it is the only province in Canada with access to only one 24-hour border crossing with a disparity to the trading relationship and access to adequate border facilities to facilitate efficient trade between Canada and the U.S.

Canada and the U.S. enjoy one of the most prosperous relationships in the world, with a staggering volume of bilateral trade totaling \$1.2 trillion in 2019¹ as well as close to 400,000 people crossing our shared borders each day. In particular, Montana and Canada continue a profitable trading relationship with bilateral trade flows totaling \$4.68 billion USD in 2018². Moreover, Canada continues to be Montana's most important customer with total Montana exports to Canada at \$680 million USD in 2018 while total Montana imports from Canada totaled \$4 billion USD. From 2011-2015 Alberta's exports to Montana have averaged \$2.52 billion annually with exports to Montana in 2015 totaling \$2.02 billion. These exports consist of primarily oil and natural gas, fertilizers, food wastes and cereals³.

While 75 percent of Alberta's exports to the U.S. were carried by pipeline, 11 percent was carried by truck, representing a value of \$8.67 billion. Almost 78 percent of all exports to the U.S. were destined for the central, northeast and southeast parts of the country. In the same year, 42 percent or \$7.54 billion worth of imports from the U.S. were carried by truck. Almost 76 percent of this total originated from the central, northeast and southeast U.S.

With the fewest number of highway/land border crossings within Canada, Alberta is also currently the only province bordering the U.S. to have one 24-hour border crossing, situated in Coutts, Alberta.

	24-Hour Crossings	Total Crossings	Population (2019)
British Columbia	8	19	5,071,000
Alberta	1	6	4,371,000
Saskatchewan	2	12	1,178,000
Manitoba	3	16	1,373,100
Ontario	13	14	14,659,000
Quebec	21	30	8,522,000
New Brunswick	12	18	780,000

It is critical that we encourage the government to remove any barriers or encumbrances on imports and exports of our key sectors between Canada and the U.S. and work to improve international trade by removing pressure and congestion on a single 24-hour commercial port and corridor. To achieve these goals, it is important for the Canadian and U.S. Governments to work together to mirror expansion efforts on both sides of the border. For example, at the Port of Wild Horse in Alberta, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency and the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) consistently extend their operating hours in the summer, but frequently have had disparity in when the extended hours begin and end for the season. Additionally, when the opportunity arose for CBP to expand the border facility at the Port of Wild Horse and move forward with an enhanced facility, CBSA had not mirrored the expansion or evaluated the opportunity for a shared port facility. CBP was able to celebrate the opening of a new facility on April 1, 2011 and the facility on the Canadian side is aging and does not mirror the same facility standards.

Inadequate border facilities and a lack of technology is an impediment to the efficient movement of goods. By ensuring that facility standards mirror adjacent port facilities in the United States and that port facilities have

¹ <https://www.international.gc.ca/economist-economiste/performance/monthly-mensuel.aspx?lang=eng>

² https://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/tcs-sdc/united-states-of-america-etats-unis-amerique/business_fact_sheets-fiches_documentaires_affaires.aspx?lang=eng#montana

³ <http://open.alberta.ca/dataset/9269de23-6d7a-448e-867e-293b4b0568e1/resource/7bd5fe74-c023-4388-99e0-17bde9e5c6db/download/2016-Montana-Alberta-Relations-August-2016.pdf>

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) systems to facilitate electronic transmission and interchange of cargo would ensure a more efficient process in the movement of goods.

Transportation access is fuel for economic development. Regions with flexible, efficient transportation networks can access product markets, suppliers, vendors, workers and customers more efficiently and more cost effectively than those that do not. We need to encourage the further development of north/south trade and remove delays, restrictions and limitations on crossing times and access. Investment leads to trade, as companies' activities increasingly become part of the global value chain, necessitating not only clear and open investment rules, but also ensuring that goods and services produced have easy access to markets in both countries and internationally.

Increased border access would enhance economic development, investment and security as well as address growing safety concerns. It would also assist truck traffic by providing an alternate route, easing lineups and delays and it would improve tourism travel by allowing increased travel service between Canada and the United States.

It is in the best interest of Canada to expand trade linkages with the United States through transportation crossings and corridors that link Canada to the United States to facilitate a growing trading market. A continued effort is needed to eliminate the obstacles that continue to prevent the expansion of 24 hours commercial port facilities and promote this as access to a north-south trade corridor.

Recommendations

That the federal government:

1. Accelerate dialogue with U.S. counterparts to ensure that the hours of Canadian border crossings consistently match the U.S. border hours in both traveler and commercial service hours and that facility standards are equivalent on both sides of the border.
2. Work to accommodate shared port of entry facilities where the opportunity exists.
3. Ensure that provinces with high volumes of bilateral trade and corridor traffic have access to sufficient 24 hour commercial border services and provinces with high volumes of trade and traffic volumes have more than a single 24 hour full-service commercial port of entry.
4. Improve the structures, facilities and technology in port facilities to better serve present needs.

SUBMITTED BY THE MEDICINE HAT & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE