

24 Hour Commercial Border Crossing Access

Canada and the U.S. enjoy one of the most prosperous relationships in the world, with a staggering volume of bilateral trade totalling \$593 billion in 2009. This equates to over \$1.6 billion in two-way trade and over 300,000 travelers crossing the border each day.

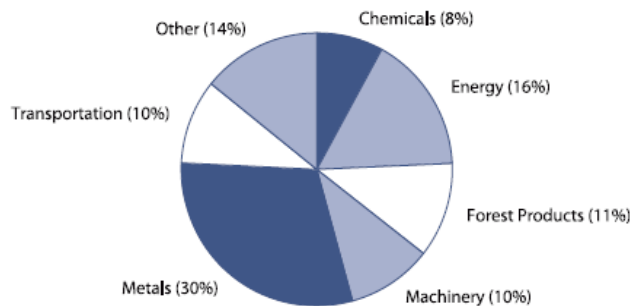
In particular, Montana and Canada continue a profitable trading relationship with bilateral trade flows climbing to \$6.5 billion with the largest proportion of trade coming in the sectors of energy, chemicals and metals. Moreover, Canada was Montana's most important export destination, purchasing more from the state than all other countries combined. Total Montana exports to Canada totaled \$593 million with total Montana imports from Canada totaling \$5.9 billion.

In 2008, 30% of Montana's total exports to Canada originated from the metals and fabricated metal products sector, shipping a wide range of metal products across the northern border - \$170 million alone in other metals in ores and scrap.

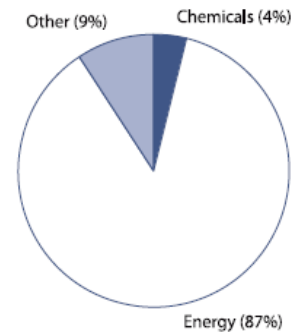
Continuing the trend, Montana looked to its northern neighbor for energy, increasing its imports by 37% from the previous year. The state bought \$4.8 billion in Canadian crude petroleum, primarily from the western provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Similarly, Montana found a vibrant market for its energy goods north of the border, exporting \$97 million.

Montana's top exports to Canada include paper & paperboard (\$51 million), automobiles (\$30 million), electric generators & motors (\$23 million), crude petroleum (\$39 million), plywood and wood building boards (\$10 million). Montana's top imports from Canada include crude petroleum (\$4.8 billion), fertilizers (\$162 million), petroleum & coal products (\$140 million), natural gas (\$123 million) and softwood lumber (\$50 million).

Montana's exports to Canada



Montana's imports from Canada



Even with this important trading relationship, a current disparity in the relationship between population, gross domestic product and the number of border crossings in each province currently exists across our country:

	24 Hour Crossing	Total Crossings	GDP (2009 C\$)	Population
British Columbia	9	19	191,006	4,530,960
Alberta	1	6	247,184	3,609,319
Saskatchewan	2	13	56,553	1,049,701
Manitoba	3	17	50,973	1,235,412
Ontario	13	14	578,183	13,210,667
Quebec	21	33	303,747	7,907,375
New Brunswick	12	18	27,497	751,755

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 our 24-hour commercial ports and corridors.

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. 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 in our region can be transported easily to market. To be part of this chain, Canada and the United States must not only be open to these cross-border opportunities, but also must ensure that the goods and services produced have easy access to markets in both countries and internationally.

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 renewed effort is needed to eliminate the obstacles that continue to prevent the expansion of 24 hour commercial port facilities and promote this as access to our north-south trade corridors.

Recommendations

That the federal government:

1. Accelerate dialogue with U.S. counterparts to provide support for border initiatives and ensure that the hours of our border crossings consistently match the U.S. border hours in both traveler and commercial service hours.
2. Ensure that provinces with high volumes of bilateral trade and corridor traffic have access to sufficient 24 hour commercial border services and that all provinces have more than a single 24 hour full service commercial port of entry.

Submitted by the Medicine Hat Chamber of Commerce, co-sponsored by the Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce

The International Affairs Committee supports this resolution.