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Alberta submits trade remedy law reform proposals to federal minister

Province encourages federal government to be more ambitious for WTO trade rules negotiations

Edmonton... The Alberta government has forwarded a second set of proposals on possible reforms to international trade remedy rules to Canada's Minister for International Trade, Pierre Pettigrew.

The Alberta government is encouraging the federal government take on the proposals as Canada prepares its position heading into upcoming World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations aimed at clarifying and improving rules on the application of countervailing and anti-dumping duty measures. International trade ministers committed to reforming global trade remedy rules during WTO negotiations in Doha, Qatar in November 2001.

"Canada must advocate a more ambitious approach to trade remedy laws if the world trading system is going to continue to flourish," said Alberta's Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations, Halvar Jonson. "When looking at the role and use of trade remedy laws, it is important to consider whether they promote the operation of competitive markets, not whether they make it easier for countries to protect themselves from imports. In the end, trade remedy rules should facilitate, not impede, normal competitive activity and the efficient allocation of resources."

Countervailing and anti-dumping duties imposed on Canadian exports in the recent past, such as those on forestry and agricultural products, have had a significant detrimental impact on key industries in Alberta.

The Alberta government's suggestions on how trade remedy rules could be reformed also provide industry with a wider range of ideas to consider, so they can put forward their own comments to the federal government.

"All provinces, territories, and industry would benefit from reforms which create a fairer, more predictable rules-based system. There are a number of improvements that can be made to international trade remedy rules and we should be working toward long-term solutions that reduce the risk of future trade actions. We would like the federal government to consider our proposals carefully, work with all the provinces and territories to develop a negotiating position, and take an ambitious approach during future WTO negotiations," explained Jonson.

The Alberta government's submission follows a request from the federal government to the provinces to contribute to the development of Canada's objectives in the WTO negotiations geared toward clarifying and improving international trade remedy laws.

Details on Alberta's most recent proposal can be found at the website:
www.iir.gov.ab.ca/trade/pages/inter_trade/pub_speeches.htm.

Information on Alberta's first proposal can be found at the website www.gov.ab.ca/acn/200010/9750.html (news release) and www.iir.gov.ab.ca/trade/media/ag_prod.pdf (proposal).

- 30 -

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