

Overview:

Premier Ed Stelmach's mission to Washington, D.C. laid the foundations for a renewed and refocused Alberta commitment to building stronger, mutually beneficial relations with the United States.

Approximately 90 per cent of Alberta's exports, worth \$74 billion per year, go to the United States, while Alberta is also a major market for U.S. goods and services. Alberta accounts for 13 per cent of the crude oil and 59 per cent of the natural gas imported by the U.S. With 13 per cent of world oil reserves and 43 per cent of non-OPEC reserves, Alberta's role as an environmentally responsible energy leader, particularly with regard to the U.S., is growing. Alberta is also a major secure, safe and reliable supplier of food products to the United States and expanded access to U.S. markets remains a top priority.

While in Washington, Premier Stelmach participated in a variety of energy, agriculture and industry focussed events; met with U.S. political leaders, including Vice-President Dick Cheney; co-hosted a reception at the Canadian Embassy with Ambassador Michael Wilson; and formally introduced Gary Mar, Alberta's new representative in Washington. Premier Stelmach also took part in events organized by the Alberta Enterprise Group in Washington, D.C. on a separate, complementary business mission.

George Groeneveld, Minister of Agriculture and Food, and Ted Morton, Minister of Sustainable Resource Development, joined Premier Stelmach on the mission. Minister Groeneveld focused on advancing Alberta's agricultural trade interests and strengthening Alberta's relationships with key U.S. agricultural decision makers. He advocated for food safety import regimes and other border measures that do not impede cross-border trade. Minister Morton met with U.S. forestry officials to discuss approaches to common challenges including the mountain pine beetle, fire management and the state of the forestry industry. He also joined the Premier in meetings with U.S. energy representatives, focusing on energy-related land use.

The mission was successful in meeting its objectives as outlined below.

Mission Objectives:

1. Reassure U.S. political and business decision-makers that Alberta has a continuing commitment and capacity as a secure, reliable and growing supplier of energy to the U.S.
2. Demonstrate Alberta's commitment to environmental responsibility in the development of its resources.
3. Build support for strengthened Canada-U.S. agricultural trade ties.
4. Show how Alberta is managing its growth pressures proactively, allowing it to remain a desirable place to do business, in both traditional and new areas of opportunity.

Results:**Wednesday, January 16**

Premier Stelmach, along with Minister Morton and Gary Mar, attended a luncheon meeting with senior officials from the U.S. Energy Association and energy industry representatives. Premier Stelmach provided an outlook for both oil and natural gas production under Alberta's new royalty framework and discussed challenges and opportunities for cooperation with the U.S. The luncheon preceded the Energy Association's annual *State of the Energy Industry* symposium, at which a variety of U.S. energy industry and interest group representatives reviewed issues, trends and challenges affecting the energy industry.

Premier Stelmach next delivered a major address at a Capitol Hill energy forum organized by the Alberta Enterprise Group entitled: *Alberta: Leading the Way on North American Energy Security*. The address focused on Alberta's continuing commitment and capacity as a secure, reliable and growing supplier of energy to the U.S. under the new royalty framework, and how Alberta is managing its growth pressures. The Premier emphasized Alberta's commitment to environmental leadership in the development of its resources. Minister Morton also participated in the forum.

Later in the afternoon, the Premier, along with Minister Morton and Mar, highlighted Alberta's commitment to environmental stewardship and the province's key role as an energy partner with the U.S. during a meeting with Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Chair, House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming.

Premier Stelmach, along with Ministers Morton and Groeneveld and Gary Mar, then participated in a briefing session at the U.S. House of Representatives. Rep. James Oberstar (D-MN) and Rep. Henry Brown (R-SC), co-chairs of the Friends of Canada Caucus, and Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), were co-hosts. The theme of the briefing session was *Trade and Investment Opportunities between the U.S. and Canada*.

As part of his separate itinerary, Minister Groeneveld met with representatives from the American Meat Institute for updates on the implementation of *Country of Origin Labeling*, food safety regulations, and access for North American beef to key markets in Asia. Minister Groeneveld also met with the Mexican Ambassador to the United States and explored deepening Mexico's relationship with Alberta and improving trade between *North American Free Trade Agreement* (NAFTA) partners. Groeneveld advocated for restored access for Alberta beef and seed potatoes to Mexico.

Groeneveld then met with the Canadian Sugar Institute to discuss proposed changes to the administration of the U.S. sugar program that would negatively affect Alberta's sugar industry, and learned of an agreement proposed by the U.S. and Mexico sugar industries that could reduce access for Alberta's sugar exports to our NAFTA partners.

The first day of the mission concluded with an Alberta reception at the Canadian Embassy, co-hosted by Ambassador Michael Wilson. The reception featured Alberta entertainment and provided the opportunity for the Premier to formally introduce Gary Mar as Alberta's new representative in Washington. The Premier was then guest of honour at a post-reception dinner hosted by Ambassador Wilson.

Thursday, January 17

The second day of the mission began with a breakfast roundtable on North American food safety, hosted by the Canadian American Business Council. Premier Stelmach's formal remarks focused on the important role of Alberta's agri-food products in the integrated continental supply chain, and the province's commitment to food safety. Minister Groeneveld also participated in the roundtable.

Premier Stelmach, along with Minister Groeneveld and Gary Mar, then met with the Honorable Dirk Kempthorne, U.S. Secretary of the Interior and the former Governor of Idaho. They discussed similar challenges the U.S. and Alberta face in environmentally sustainable energy resource development, especially in oil shales and oil sands.

Premier Stelmach brought closing remarks to an Alberta Enterprise Group investment forum. The Premier profiled business opportunities in Alberta, including oil sands and other non-conventional oil and gas; new value added industries, including those that will accrue from upgrading and refining; environmental technologies in the energy sector; and non-energy sector industries including agriculture and high tech.

During their separate itineraries, Ministers Groeneveld and Morton focussed on a variety of issues in discussions with other officials. Minister Groeneveld met with representatives from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and reviewed trends in the U.S. cattle industry and the impact of mandatory *Country of Origin Labeling*, and access for beef in key Asian markets. They also explored greater international cooperation on animal health regulations and the prospects of expanded international market access for beef at the Doha Round of World Trade Organization meetings.

Minister Morton met with Alberta's legal representatives in Washington and was updated on developing issues related to the *Softwood Lumber Agreement*. During a meeting with the U.S. forest service, Minister Morton discussed the province's response to the challenges posed by the mountain pine beetle and the health of public forests.

Later that day, Premier Stelmach, along with Ministers Groeneveld and Morton and Gary Mar, met with Rep. Collin Peterson (D-MN), chair, House Committee on Agriculture; and then with Chuck Conner, Acting U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. Premier Stelmach thanked the U.S. Department of Agriculture for its support on the BSE issue, including further opening of the border to live cattle. He also reinforced Alberta's commitment to food safety and urged greater Canada-U.S. collaboration to prevent it from becoming a barrier to trade. The Premier also urged resolution of Canada-U.S. issues that negatively affect agricultural trade, including various elements of the proposed *U.S. Farm Bill*.

The day concluded with the Alberta delegation attending the Edmonton Oilers-Washington Capitals hockey game, during which the Canadian armed forces were saluted for their role in the war in Afghanistan. Alberta soldiers took part in opening ceremonies at the game.

Friday, January 18

Before departing Washington, Premier Stelmach and Minister Morton met with U.S. Vice President Cheney. Discussions focused on energy and trade issues. Vice President Cheney was briefed on Alberta's recent environmental initiatives and on Alberta's ongoing commitment to playing a key role in North American energy security.

Delegation:

- Premier Ed Stelmach
- Mrs. Marie Stelmach
- Hon. George Groeneveld, Minister of Agriculture and Food
- Hon. Ted Morton, Minister of Sustainable Resource Development
- Ken Faulkner, Executive Director, Southern Alberta Office of the Premier
- Tom Olsen, Director of Media Relations, Office of the Premier
- Michael Norris, Executive Assistant to Minister Groeneveld