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## NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier

### **ALBERTA AND B.C. BREAK DOWN BARRIERS TO CREATE SINGLE LARGE MARKET**

EDMONTON – Alberta and British Columbia have signed a groundbreaking agreement to eliminate barriers to trade, investment and labour mobility between the two provinces. The agreement creates the second largest economic region in Canada.

The two provinces signed the Alberta-British Columbia Trade, Investment, and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) at the 4<sup>th</sup> annual joint Alberta-British Columbia Cabinet meeting in Edmonton on April 28. The agreement will give businesses and workers in both provinces seamless access to a larger range of opportunities across all sectors including energy, transportation, labour mobility, business registration, and government procurement. The agreement will:

- Streamline business registration and reporting requirements so that businesses registered in one province are automatically recognized in the other;
- Enhance labour mobility by recognizing occupational certifications of workers in both provinces;
- Provide open and non-discriminatory access to government procurement; and,
- Create a clear, comprehensive and enforceable dispute avoidance and dispute resolution mechanism.

“This continues a process that began in 2003 when Premier Campbell and I, along with our Cabinets, first met in Calgary,” said Alberta Premier Ralph Klein. “Together, we created a combined Alberta-B.C. market of more than 7.5 million people. Our larger economy and freer trade environment will build prosperity for both our provinces and give us a stronger economic voice as we attract investment and entrepreneurs, and offer a larger range of choices for consumers and for workers. Our provinces have set a new standard for what interprovincial trade can and should look like.”

“We have created a powerful new economic partnership that is the product of unprecedented inter-provincial co-operation and commitment to freer trade within Canada,” said B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell. “This open inter-provincial economy will liberate opportunities in trade, investment, employment and job creation in both provinces and it creates a platform for both provinces to take advantage of Asia-Pacific opportunities. We have two of the strongest, most dynamic economies in all of Canada and this agreement will make B.C. and Alberta even stronger.”

The agreement commences April 1, 2007 and will include a transition period to April 2009 before the agreement comes into full effect to give both governments time to bring their measures into conformity. Provinces also will negotiate to extend the agreement to include identified areas such as financial services, municipal governments and Crown Corporations.

In addition to the agreement, Alberta and B.C. signed four other Memorandums of Understanding covering:

- Charter buses – allowing operators to have the same access to both provincial markets;
- Energy research, technology development and innovation – creating mechanisms to share information and participate in joint projects and programs.
- Post-secondary education – supporting co-operation in research and information sharing, and developing common approaches to improve quality and access.
- Inter-provincial parks between Alberta and B.C. – allowing cooperation to protect, plan and manage parks that share the border, and establishing the Kakwa-Willmore Interprovincial Park.

Since October 2003, when Premiers Klein and Campbell signed the Alberta-B.C. Protocol of Cooperation in Calgary, 15 agreements have been signed that commit Alberta and British Columbia to work together in a wide range of areas. The increased efficiency from this common sense co-operation has resulted in real financial savings for Alberta and British Columbia taxpayers and the businesses that operate in our provinces.

A copy of Alberta-British Columbia Trade, Investment, and Labour Mobility Agreement is available online at:

[www.gov.bc.ca/ecdev/popt/media\\_room/bc\\_ab\\_trade\\_investment\\_mobility\\_agreement.htm](http://www.gov.bc.ca/ecdev/popt/media_room/bc_ab_trade_investment_mobility_agreement.htm)

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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