



March 31, 2009

Trade accord will benefit economy *TILMA transforms internal trade and labour mobility in Canada*

Edmonton... An unprecedented Alberta-B.C. trade agreement that has been the catalyst to full labour mobility nationally and that will help make Canada a more desirable place for global investment comes into full force April 1.

Since beginning to phase in the *Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement* (TILMA) in 2006, restrictive interprovincial trade barriers have been eradicated and more than 100 regulated occupations now have full labour mobility between Canada's two westernmost provinces.

"The TILMA shows that when governments work together and apply common sense, great things can happen," said Ron Stevens, Alberta Deputy Premier and Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations. "The agreement has reduced government red tape, making life easier for workers and small businesses in Alberta, and in doing so, positions the province to be more competitive both domestically and internationally."

Under the TILMA, teachers or welders certified in one province are able to move to the other without recertification or examination. Also, a long-distance trucker driving the Trans-Canada between Vancouver and Calgary will not face a host of differing and duplicative regulations on each side of the Alberta-B.C. border. The two provinces are launching a streamlined company and business registration system to eliminate the requirement and fees for registering in both provinces and for duplicate annual report filings.

The TILMA also helped prompt the federal government and all provinces to agree last summer to full labour mobility under the *Agreement on Internal Trade*. And more recently, the TILMA has spurred discussions between other provinces to further eliminate interprovincial barriers that hamper economic growth and activity.

Ida Chong, B.C. Minister of Technology, Trade and Economic Development agreed that reducing internal trade barriers is critical to the economy. "TILMA creates tremendous opportunities for growth and prosperity for citizens of both our provinces," said Chong.

Additionally TILMA has taken several steps to open up healthy competition that benefit businesses, taxpayers and consumers in both provinces.

- Lowered provincial government procurement thresholds to \$10,000 for goods and \$75,000 for services. The previous thresholds were \$25,000 for goods and \$100,000 for services. Construction thresholds remain at \$100,000.

- Lowered public-sector procurement thresholds for municipalities, academic institutions, school boards and hospitals (MASH) to \$75,000 for goods and services, and \$200,000 for construction projects. The previous thresholds were \$100,000 for goods and services and \$250,000 for construction projects.

Both provinces supported an open and transparent process and held extensive consultations with the MASH sector to determine how the agreement would apply. The provinces also worked closely with the professional regulatory bodies responsible for reconciling qualification requirements between the provinces.

The TILMA is designed to continue to benefit the people of British Columbia and Alberta as the two governments have committed to ensure that any legislation, regulations or policies proposed in the future, will not impede the movement of goods, persons and investment between the two provinces.

Alberta and B.C. have updated www.tilma.ca with all the final provisions for the agreement and encourage interested parties to visit the site for more information. Workers and businesses will find information on the agreement, people to contact about full labour mobility, how to access procurement opportunities as well as detailed questions and answers about the agreement.

- 30 -

Backgrounder attached.

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