

(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

**HON. GARY MAR
MINISTER OF ALBERTA INTERNATIONAL AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

**PRESENTATION TO CALGARY CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE**

SEPTEMBER 25, 2006

**MCDUGALL CENTRE
PEKISKO ROOM**

On behalf of the governments of Alberta and British Columbia, thank you for joining us today.

The Honourable Colin Hansen, British Columbia's Minister of Economic Development, and I are pleased to be here in Calgary this morning to provide you with more information about a new, groundbreaking trade agreement between our two provinces.

For years, business has called for more open trade between provinces and our governments have explored the idea. We even made some progress, with a national *Agreement on Internal Trade*.

But, real free trade eluded us, because behind every discussion lies a fear that we put our own economies at risk if we open the door too far. Well, British Columbia and Alberta have not just opened the door. We blew it off its hinges.

When we signed our trade, investment and labour mobility agreement, or TILMA, earlier this year, we created the most open free trade region in Canada. And, in doing so, we are creating Canada's next economic powerhouse:

- a combined gross domestic product that is second only to Ontario;
- Canada's third-largest market, with 7.5 million people; and,
- equal Access to business, investment and labour in both provinces.

The border between our provinces is no longer a barrier.

The agreement comes into force next April. Just two years after that, in 2009, free trade will apply almost all areas of our economies. This agreement opens:

- the energy sector;
- the movement of skilled labour;
- investment;
- government procurement;
- agriculture;
- transportation; and,
- financial services.

Professionals and trades workers who are certified here in Alberta will have their credentials in that same occupation recognized in B.C., and vice versa. Already, we are looking at expanding the agreement to public sectors, like:

- municipalities;
- school boards;
- publicly funded academia;
- health and social services; and,
- Crown corporations.

The whole thing is backed by a superior and enforceable dispute resolution process that learns from the shortcomings of the *Agreement on Internal Trade* and relies:

- first on dispute avoidance;
- then on consultation; and,
- if necessary, in terms of enforcement, some very big fiscal teeth.

B.C. and Alberta know the best protection for our economies is a truly free and dynamic open market that invites investment, attracts workers, and brings in

business, through the very size and scope of its potential. This agreement creates that potential. We hope it sets a new model for the rest of the country to follow.

Minister Hansen and I invite you to learn more about the B.C.-Alberta trade agreement, help generate excitement and interest in what it means to our provinces, and become advocates and partners in implementing TILMA, and in building a new future.

Thank you very much.