



Premiers United, Call for Federal Partnership and Action

TORONTO, ON, December 2, 2019 – Canada’s Premiers are united in their commitment to work together for the benefit of all Canadians. They came together today in unprecedented fashion to discuss challenges and opportunities facing the country; share regional perspectives; and identify ways to better address the needs of Canadians wherever they live and work. Premiers discussed opportunities related to the regional jobs and economic potential in resource industries such as the energy, mining, forestry, agriculture and fisheries sectors. They reiterated their commitment to growing the Canadian economy and taking the necessary steps to address regional disparities across the country.

Premiers continue to seek a constructive partnership with the federal government and invite the Prime Minister to co-host a meeting of First Ministers early in the new year to work together to address regional concerns and pursue shared priorities. Premiers have written to the Prime Minister today to share this approach and look forward to his swift response.

Premiers agreed on the need for immediate action on the following priority areas:

1. Economic Competitiveness

Premiers are committed to strengthening Canada’s economy to increase competitiveness and create jobs in every region. Premiers’ priorities include:

- Continuing to develop resources in a responsible manner and ensure access to markets for Canada’s products, which are among the most sustainably and ethically produced in the world.
- Working with the federal government to pursue improvements to the federal environmental assessment regime to ensure regulatory certainty, globally competitive timelines, and the full implementation of ‘one project, one assessment’ by exempting projects that fall within provincial-territorial jurisdiction from mandatory federal impact assessment.
- Expanding international trade to get our resources and products to all markets and work to eliminate protectionist measures, such as those on softwood lumber and Buy America provisions which negatively impact our industries.

2. Fiscal Stabilization Program

The Fiscal Stabilization Program is intended to support jurisdictions experiencing significant fiscal challenges. Premiers call for the federal government to work with finance ministers to strengthen the Fiscal Stabilization Program to make it more responsive to economic circumstances and downturns in resource sectors without compromising other transfer programs. Changes could include, but are not limited to,

removing the per capita cap, lowering the non-resource revenue threshold and retroactive payments over the last five years.

3. Healthcare and Infrastructure

The federation works best when provinces and territories have the autonomy and resources to pursue their economic and social objectives. Respecting provincial/territorial jurisdiction, Premiers reiterated their call for the federal government to increase funding by an annual escalator of 5.2% to the Canada Health Transfer consistent with independent analysis by the Conference Board of Canada of budget pressures. Premiers also discussed national pharmacare and emphasized that any program must be developed in partnership with provinces and territories.

Federal infrastructure funding should be flexible, respect provincial-territorial priorities, and the federal approval process must be accelerated.

Federal transfers should include opportunities to opt out with full financial compensation. Further, the federal government must respect provincial/territorial jurisdiction and authority.

4. Northern Priorities

Tangible and significant nation-building activities are needed in the three territories. This includes robust investment in infrastructure that will improve the lives of northerners, and greater support for climate action that fights, mitigates and adapts to rapidly changing environments in the North.

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