



## **Premiers Discuss Important Issues for Canadians**

**TORONTO, December 16, 2024** – Canada’s Premiers are committed to maintaining strong Canada-U.S. relations, supporting energy security, and improving healthcare for Canadians.

Premiers reaffirmed their support for a prosperous and secure Canada and for working with the federal government on trade, border security, and Arctic security and sovereignty. They also discussed the need for greater federal consultation on immigration policy changes, including targets and adequate federal funding to support service delivery for asylum seekers.

Premiers also discussed public safety issues and continue to call on the federal government for further action on bail reform, countering organized crime including auto theft, and the movement of illegal guns into Canada. Premiers remain concerned about illegal migration, money laundering and the cross-border flow of firearms, fentanyl and precursors.

The essential role of the Canada-U.S. relationship for Canadian prosperity was highlighted and Premiers committed to collaborating with the federal government to ensure the interests of all Canadians are represented in that relationship.

### **Canada – U.S. Relations**

Canada and the U.S. form one of the largest integrated markets in the world with more than C\$3.5 billion worth of goods and services crossing the border each day. The U.S. sells more goods and services to Canada than it sells to China, Japan, and Germany combined. Provinces and territories are strategic partners with the U.S. in trade and investment, transportation, critical minerals, energy, manufacturing, agriculture, natural resources, the environment, and Arctic security and sovereignty. The imposition of tariffs by the U.S. would be a significant failure on the part of the Government of Canada.

Premiers are concerned about U.S. President-elect Trump’s stated intent to impose tariffs on imports from Canada, hurting jobs, affordability, investment, and integrated supply chains in both countries. Premiers are committed to free and fair trade and will advocate against tariffs that threaten our deeply integrated and mutually beneficial economic relationships. Premiers will advocate for Canadians by supporting appropriate action by the federal government in response to any U.S. tariffs imposed on imports from Canada, and call on the federal government to ensure solutions are regionally fair, and provinces and territories are active participants in the design of Canada’s response.

Premiers agree that the priority is to act to avoid tariffs. They discussed the upcoming CUSMA review as a further opportunity to strengthen our trading relationships. Provinces and territories must have a significant role during the negotiation process to ensure a range of provincial and territorial interests are duly advocated for. All Premiers agreed that Mexico must strengthen its commitment to jointly addressing threats to North American competitiveness resulting from unfair Chinese trading practices.

Canada's partnership with the U.S. is also founded on each country remaining a strong and reliable ally. Premiers urged the federal government to accelerate reaching the NATO defence spending target of 2% of GDP, recognizing its critical connection to strategic infrastructure as well as the broader implications for Canada's economic and security partnership with the U.S. Premiers also emphasized that more must be done to safeguard Arctic security and sovereignty.

The federal government must take a proactive approach to secure our borders for Canadians. Premiers remain concerned about illegal migration, money laundering and the cross-border flow of firearms, fentanyl and precursors. Premiers discussed the Prime Minister's commitment to return to the First Ministers' table with a comprehensive border security plan, including the human and financial resources required for successful implementation. They agreed that it is critical that this plan demonstrates strong action and shows that Canada takes the security of our border seriously. The plan must also include measures to tighten the visa issuance policy to prevent arrivals to Canada under false pretenses.

Premiers will pursue a COF Mission to the U.S. in February 2025 to further cement ongoing work to build strong U.S. partnerships.

## **Energy Security**

Premiers discussed energy affordability and measures being taken to manage energy costs. They agreed the advancement of emerging technologies will provide opportunities for safe and reliable energy to meet the demands of a growing economy and population.

Premiers also discussed opportunities to strengthen energy security in Canada and North America, and to supply the world with dependable and ethically produced energy and critical minerals. Premiers noted the challenges created by gaps in energy corridors to serve rural, remote, and northern regions. They remain committed to ensuring that residents, businesses, and industry continue to have access to reliable and affordable energy, and critical energy infrastructure, wherever they are in Canada.

To support a lower-carbon economy, it is imperative that Canada's regulatory system focuses on attracting responsible development by emphasizing predictability, certainty, and a reasonable return on investment while protecting the environment. The federal government must honour its commitment to work with provinces and territories so that regulatory processes are efficient and non-duplicative for projects that support grid capacity, energy development, and access to critical minerals.

Federal climate and energy policies must not infringe on provincial and territorial jurisdiction, impact affordability, or compromise the reliability of electrical systems. Premiers discussed the impacts of the proposed Clean Electricity Regulations, Clean Fuel Regulations, the draft oil and gas emissions cap, and the federal carbon tax scheduled to increase April 1, 2025.

The federal government must ensure its climate policies recognize early and ongoing climate action by provinces and territories and acknowledges their unique needs and differences while supporting a vibrant economy.

## **Health Care**

Since 2010, provinces and territories have been leaders in reducing the costs of prescription drugs through the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance (pCPA). As of April 1, 2024, the pCPA has saved \$4.63 billion annually in combined jurisdictional savings.

Premiers commended the good work of the pCPA, including the recent launch of the pCPA Temporary Access Process (pTAP), to ensure timely access to medicines and treatments. Together, Premiers noted their continued interest in driving work to accelerate patient access to new and lifesaving publicly funded medicines and referred this priority to Health Ministers.

Provinces and territories continue to take action to improve health outcomes for Canadians, including the recruitment and retention of healthcare workers. Premiers urge the federal government to collaborate as a full partner on the long-term sustainability of healthcare systems across the country.

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