



# Pan Canadian Chamber Forum: Tariffs and Elections

January 2025

## Summary

The Pan-Canadian Chamber Forum (PCCF) convened chamber leaders to address key challenges shaping Canada’s trade and business landscape. Discussions centered on strengthening Canada-U.S. trade relations, mitigating tariff impacts, removing interprovincial trade barriers, and providing chambers with Election Toolkits in the upcoming federal election period.

Topic	Content / Discussion Points
<b>1. Welcome and Opening Remarks</b>	<p><b>1.1 Recap of AGM Insights</b> A short review of key feedback on network value and business model innovation.</p> <p><b>1.2 Pan Canadian Chamber Forum Pillars</b></p>
<b>2. Canada–U.S. Trade Relations and Tariffs</b>	<p><b>2.1 What We Heard in Washington D.C. and Policy Insights</b> Summaries of advocacy activities, stakeholder feedback &amp; Interprovincial Trade Advancements</p> <p><b>2.2 Business Data Lab &amp; Canada–U.S. <a href="#">Trade Tracker</a>:</b> Key statistics and emerging trends.</p> <p><b>2.3 Discussion</b></p>
<b>3. National Election Toolkit</b>	<p><b>3.1 Toolkit Status: Outline recent advancements and next steps</b></p> <p><b>3.2 Discussion</b></p>

This document is divided into four sections:

1. Pan Canadian Chamber Forum
2. Context on Tariffs,
3. Discussion on Tariffs
4. Election Toolkit Updates



## 1. Pan Canadian Chamber Forum

- **Chamber 100th Anniversary: Highlighting the Value Proposition of Chambers**  
As part of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's 100th anniversary celebrations, the Chamber is developing a campaign style platform to highlight importance of chambers in addressing community challenges and supporting the growth and prosperity of business and the economy
- **Presentation of Pillars of the PCCF from AGM Halifax 2024** (*for more details, please refer to the "What We Heard at the AGM 2024" document*)

### **Strengthening our united voice, chamber value, and impact**

- Develop a national campaign to showcase the relevance of chambers
- Ensure Chamber Network brand consistency

### **Enhancing the power of shared advocacy at national, provincial, and local levels**

- Provide tools for advocacy for local communities
- Align national and local advocacy efforts
- Improve communications related to policy resolutions
- Act on unifying issues such as interprovincial trade

### **Supporting the viability and growth of chambers**

- Become more Relevant for Gen Y and Gen Z
- Enhance member services and diversify revenue streams
- Build economies of scale
- Improve Governance and the Board of Trade Act

### **Expanding support for business and communities**

- Strengthen grassroots engagement
- Reiterate commitment to small businesses



## 2. Tariffs Context Setting

### ***Engagement in Washington, D.C.***

- The Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC) leadership participated in inauguration events with key partners such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the United States Council for International Business, and engaged with think tanks industry groups and influencers to advocate for Canadian business interests.
- Media appearances, including interviews on CTV and CBC, amplified messages about the risks and economic impacts of potential tariffs.
- Although no tariffs have been imposed yet, the risk persists, with key deadlines and counter measures looming

### ***Market and Economic Concerns***

- Markets overwhelmingly oppose tariffs due to their disruptive effect on supply chains, increased costs, and heightened uncertainty for businesses.
- Trump's history of weaponizing trade relationships underscores the importance of proactive, ongoing advocacy.
- A potential 25% tariff would disproportionately impact Canada, costing an estimated \$1,900 per Canadian and affecting vital sectors such as energy, automotive, and metals.
- Stock market performance was a key KPI during Trump's first presidency and will likely remain significant. Strong tariffs are viewed as highly disruptive and costly for businesses and supply chains on both sides of the border.
- The Chamber Network plays a critical role by:
  - Building direct relationships on the ground in the U.S.
  - Supporting businesses that trade with or have operations in the U.S.
  - Communicating the economic consequences of tariffs effectively to all stakeholders.

### ***The Canada-U.S. Trade Tracker***

- The [Trade Tracker](#) is an interactive resource offering provincial and state-level insight into the Canada–U.S. trade relationship, enabling chambers to advocate more effectively.
- Key data points include trade volumes, job impacts, and a breakdown of export and import products.
- Over 60% of Canada's exports to the U.S. serve as inputs for American industries, highlighting the mutual benefits of cross-border trade.
- Tariffs would disproportionately affect provinces like Ontario, Alberta, Quebec, and New Brunswick, all of which rely heavily on U.S. markets.
- Upcoming CCC resources include:
  - A coordinated social media campaign.
  - "How-to" videos guiding chambers on maximizing the Tracker's capabilities.
  - CMA-level analysis to identify city-specific trade impacts.



### 3. Tariffs Discussion

#### ***Ensuring Our Messaging Reaches “Main Street USA”***

- Advocacy on Main Street USA is paramount to influencing public opinion against tariffs and bolstering Canada–U.S. trade. Currently, there is a limited understanding of the Canada–U.S. trade relationship on Main Street.
- Advocacy efforts must highlight relatable, real-life examples that resonate with small businesses to demonstrate how tariffs affect local economies.
- Markets, particularly the stock market, vehemently oppose tariff implementation.
- The Partners in Prosperity initiative and the [Trade Tracker](#) have been shared with the **Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE)** to amplify Canada’s message throughout the U.S. chamber network.
- In the ongoing battle for public opinion, the CCC will focus on improving target U.S. media in strategic regions and ensure engagement with audiences in red states to influence the political narrative around tariffs.

#### ***Where to Start***

- **Begin Locally and Strategically:** For chambers unsure about where to begin their advocacy, local collaborations and targeted outreach are recommended first steps. Align these efforts with provincial/territorial chamber initiatives, as premiers will be key players in developing U.S. strategies.
- **Identify Key U.S. Chambers:** Make sure you know which U.S. chambers of commerce you want to engage with and establish a clear line of communication. Next, reach out to them to offer support and learn what information they may find valuable.
- **Use the Canadian Chamber’s Business Data Lab [Trade Tracker](#) as a Conversation Starter:** Introduce the Chambers BDL Tracker early in your discussions to highlight the importance of cross-border relationships. Ask, “Are you aware of this tool, and how can we use it to start talking about our shared interests?”
- **Leverage Municipal Relationships:** Tap into existing ties, such as sister city agreements or municipal trade partnerships, to strengthen community-level connections and advocacy efforts.
- **Focus on Strategic Regions:** Prioritize high-value trading partners, such as the Great Lakes states, along with often-overlooked regions like Georgia, Mississippi, and Oklahoma, which rely significantly on Canadian trade.
- **Coordinate Across the Network:** Work closely with other Canadian chambers to align your messaging and avoid duplicating efforts. Sharing insights and strategies ensures a unified approach to Canada–U.S. advocacy.



### ***Addressing Interprovincial Trade Barriers & Market Diversification***

- Removing interprovincial trade barriers could significantly boost Canada's economy, helping to counterbalance the potential impact of U.S. tariffs.
- The Canadian Chamber is working with Provincial and Territorial Chamber CEOs to influence the Council of the Federation to make the removal of interprovincial trade barriers a top priority.
  - The group is actively involved in providing recommendations to the Council of the Federation and meetings with the Canadian Government
  - More involvement of the Network will continue as the file advances
- Protectionist tendencies in the U.S. is prompting Canadian businesses to explore opportunities in markets like India and Europe.

## **4. Election Toolkit**

- Election Timing Preparedness: We're preparing for both a potential spring or fall election, with plans ready for either scenario.
- **Customizable Approach:** The Canadian Chamber's election toolkit is designed to be flexible, allowing chambers to tailor it to their local needs rather than a one-size-fits-all model. A survey will be sent out to gather regional priorities.
- **Key Toolkit Components will include:**
  - **Issue Briefs:** Background information on key topics to help chambers guide discussions and advocacy.
  - **Advocacy Strategies:** Tactics for effective engagement at the local level.
  - **Social Media & Communications Tools:** Sample posts, email templates, and messaging guidance.
  - **Debate & Candidate Engagement Resources:** Questions for local debates and alternative options like candidate interviews for newsletters.
- **Election Rules Compliance:** The toolkit will provide guidance on Elections Canada's new regulations, particularly regarding paid advertisements.