



The Voice of Canadian Business™
Le porte-parole des entreprises canadiennes^{MD}

May 16, 2008

Mr. Lee Richardson, M.P.
Chair, House of Commons Standing
Committee on International Trade
House of Commons
Centre Block, Suite 432C
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

*Office of the President and
Chief Executive Officer*

*Cabinet du président
et chef de la direction*

Dear Mr. Richardson:

**Re: Study of the Status of the Free Trade Agreements and ongoing negotiations
between Canada and Colombia**



I am writing to express the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's support for the Government of Canada's pursuit of a free trade agreement (FTA) with Colombia. As a result of Colombia's influence and significance within the region, a Canada – Colombia FTA should be a key element of Canada's re-engagement with the Americas.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce is Canada's largest and most representative business organization. We are the national leader in public policy advocacy on business issues and *the Voice of Canadian Business™*. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce is a diverse network of 175,000 organizations, including chambers of commerce, boards of trade, business associations and businesses of all sizes, from all sectors of the economy and all regions of Canada.

The Canadian Chamber supports an agreement that ensures free, fair and open trade between Canada and Colombia and offers protection for foreign investors. At present, Colombia has concluded an agreement with the United States. Although it is unclear when this agreement may be passed by Congress, most commentators expect the FTA to eventually come into force. Colombia is also negotiating an FTA with the European Union. These developments make a successful conclusion to Canada's negotiations with Colombia all the more critical to ensure that Canadian companies are not put at a competitive disadvantage to our foreign competitors.

Canadian companies recognize the business value, when operating both domestically and internationally, of sustainable business operations. This includes operating in a manner that takes into account the economic, social and environmental impacts of the business. The responsible business practices of Canadian companies operating on the ground in Colombia, coupled with the reforms being implemented domestically in Colombia to create a more stable and secure climate in the country, are helping to

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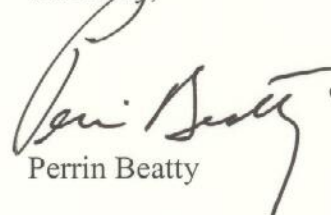
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make progress. The successful conclusion of a Canada-Colombia FTA will help to cement this progress and ensure that it continues. Canada can lead the way, supporting a strategic ally and providing concrete benefits for Canadians, by concluding and implementing an FTA with Colombia before either of the US or the EU does.

We strongly encourage your committee to endorse these negotiations and the benefits that the agreement can bring to Canadian companies and to Canadians.

Sincerely,



Perrin Beatty

Supporting Companies:
General Motors of Canada Limited
Scotiabank
Bombardier Inc.
Barrick Gold Corporation
Teck Cominco Limited
Enbridge Inc.
Nexen Inc.
Talisman Energy Inc.
Wal-Mart Canada Corp.

CC: Mr. Jacques Lahaie, Clerk of the House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade
Members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade
The Honourable David Emerson, Minister of International Trade
Mr. Ian Burney, Chief Trade Negotiator, Bilateral and Regional, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
Ms. Carol Nelder-Corvari, Director, International Trade Policy Division, Finance Canada