



MEDIA RELEASE

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MAYORS SUPPORT FREE TRADE WHEN IT'S FAIR TRADE

The Greater Toronto Area Countryside Mayors Alliance (GTACMA) has long recognized the benefits that Free Trade between the United States and Canada has provided to municipalities on both sides of the border. However, at their meeting on May 22, 2009, it was resolved that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), commonly referred to as the "Buy American" act, is contrary to the spirit of free trade.

"This Mayors' Alliance believes in Free Trade, but more importantly in Fair Trade," said Town of Caledon Mayor Marolyn Morrison, chair of the GTACMA. "The restrictive measures of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act essentially prevent Canadian companies from bidding on American contracts. In Canada, we have no such restrictions. This is simply not fair, nor is it good business practice."

In addition to the North America Free Trade Act, Canadian municipalities are governed by several other pieces of legislation which promote open and fair competition: the Discriminatory Business Practices Act; and the Inter-provincial Agreement on International Trade; the Federal Competition Act. Even the Canadian Charter of Rights provides for fair competition in a free-trade environment, regardless of geographic location.

In their resolutions, the GTACMA also announced their support of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters in their quest to have the United States Congress reconsider and repeal the "Buy American" requirements. Additionally, the GTACMA is requesting that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities consider the resolutions from this May meeting be presented at the annual convention in June, and will be forwarding their resolution package to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Premier of Ontario and the Federal and Provincial Ministers of Trade and Industry, in addition to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

"Given the fundamental differences between the Free Trade agreement which was drafted in the spirit of fair and open commerce, and the restrictions of the current "Buy American" economic stimulus plan, there is now a need to find a way to make companies in both countries equal. This is not only good for the economy, it's just good business," said Mayor Morrison.

The Resolutions from the May 22, 2009 meeting, moved by Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette, and seconded by Township of Scugog Mayor Marilyn Pearce, are attached for your reference.

ABOUT GTCMA:

The Greater Toronto Area Countryside Mayors' Alliance is comprised of Mayors from municipalities with populations under 100,000. These municipalities include: the town of Aurora, the township of Brock, the town of Caledon, the municipality of Clarington, the town of Georgina, the town of East Gwillimbury, the town of Halton Hills, the township of King, the town of Milton, the town of Newmarket, the township of Scugog, the township of Uxbridge, the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and the city of Pickering. The GTCMA monitors and evaluates Provincial policies, procedures, and regulations, provides input and conducts research for the enhancement of local government in the countryside municipalities of the greater Toronto area, and advocates for changes to proposed legislation on behalf of members.

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