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5 Minutes for Business

Modernizing NAFTA – Come Join Our Campaign!

June 22, 2017

We remain optimistic that NAFTA 2.0 could be a huge boost to the economies of North America because there is so much to be gained. But we're also starting to worry: anti-trade rhetoric and posturing could veer the talks towards trouble. There are a lot of contentious issues to resolve in an unreasonably short deadline. Trade, in general, and NAFTA, in particular, are massively unpopular with Trump supporters.

And the decision-making in Washington D.C. around trade issues has become increasingly chaotic, with U.S. business groups pushing back aggressively against nationalists in the administration. We've already seen an executive order to withdraw from NAFTA, where President Trump told the *Washington Post*, "I looked forward to terminating. I was going to do it." It was the [uproar from U.S. business that forced the Trump Administration to reverse its position](#).

And again this week, the U.S. government appeared poised to make a dangerous decision on steel tariffs. The Commerce department was supposed to brief Congress on the tariffs last Friday, but the meeting was cancelled. [Officials are now scrambling to alter the decision after ferocious blowback from U.S. business](#).

The lesson is clear: the most important group advocating trade is not politicians or (god help us) economists. It's the business community because businesses understand the real world consequences, the jobs that depend on trade. These folks have a very powerful message that resonates with the general public as well as local members of Congress and Senators. And they are the most credible on the benefits of trade.

It's exciting to see business at the forefront of this campaign, and we need your help. The Canadian Chamber is organizing visits to key U.S. states, including Tennessee, Texas and Georgia. (We've already been to Virginia and South Carolina.) We'll be

meeting local businesses and U.S. political leaders to raise awareness of the benefits of the Canada-U.S. relationship and to point out the risks of damaging it.

Our CEO, Perrin Beatty, recently pointed out, "When you go to Washington and meet politicians on Capitol Hill, you're just another foreign lobbyist. But when you go out to their congressional district in Memphis, with Canadian business leaders who are investing in the local economy, importing their goods and hiring their workers, then you are priority number one."

Participants are needed to make this strategy effective. Businesses, large and small, in all sectors are invited. We would also appreciate if you could provide us with information about your relationships in those states – the key suppliers, major investments, etc. Canadian firms with local offices in these states can help by alerting the local branches of our visits and asking them to participate in events or perhaps host site tours, etc. If you'd like to participate or join any of our delegations, please [email us](#).

We're also playing a direct role in Canada's NAFTA negotiations. Our CEO met last week with the Cabinet Committee and our Vice President is on the Chief Negotiator's consultative committee. Our framework NAFTA brief has been submitted to the Global Affairs department. We'll be providing additional information to our trade negotiators in the coming weeks and months. If you have trade issues that you want us to bring to Canada's NAFTA negotiators, please [email us](#).

Let's put the power of the network behind NAFTA. Our economies and our jobs depend on it.

For more information, please contact :

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