



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chatham-Kent Chamber Calls for Resilience, Preparation and a Thoughtful Response to Trade Uncertainty

CHATHAM-KENT, Ontario, July 22, 2026 — The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce is encouraging businesses, governments and residents to respond to renewed trade uncertainty with resilience, careful preparation and a shared commitment to protecting Canadian jobs.

New trade actions directed at Canada create legitimate risks for businesses connected to agriculture, agribusiness, advanced manufacturing, automotive production, transportation and cross-border supply chains. These sectors are important contributors to Chatham-Kent's economy and support thousands of jobs throughout the region.

The Chamber cautions, however, that uncertainty should not lead to panic or rushed decisions. A thoughtful and coordinated response is required—one that recognizes the seriousness of the risk while carefully considering the consequences of every action.

"Trade disruption of this nature creates legitimate risk, but the strongest response is preparation, not panic," said **Rory Ring, President and CEO of the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce**. "Chatham-Kent businesses are experienced, adaptable and resilient. Now is the time to assess exposure, strengthen supply chains, pursue new markets and build stronger relationships with Canadian customers and suppliers. A thoughtful, disciplined approach will help businesses protect operations, preserve Canadian jobs and position themselves to respond from a place of strength."

The Chamber is encouraging businesses to review their exposure to changing trade conditions, including customer concentration, supply-chain dependencies, sourcing arrangements, contractual obligations and access to alternative markets.

Businesses should also consider opportunities to diversify trade, strengthen relationships with domestic suppliers, identify new Canadian and international customers, and develop contingency plans that can help insulate their operations from future disruptions.

Canada must continue to defend its economic interests and stand behind affected industries. At the same time, any government response should be strategic, measured and designed to protect businesses, workers and consumers from unintended consequences.

The Chamber emphasized that supporting local and Canadian businesses is one practical action residents and organizations can take immediately.

“Resilience is part of Chatham-Kent’s character,” said **Amanda Clark, Chair of the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors**. “When our community faces uncertainty, we come together, support one another and keep moving forward. By choosing local, buying Canadian and standing behind the businesses and workers who create jobs here at home, we turn concern into meaningful action. This challenge is serious, but it also reminds us of the strength we have when businesses, residents and community leaders act with confidence and purpose.”

Shopping locally, choosing Canadian-made products and services, and supporting Canadian job creators help keep investment circulating within communities. These decisions support local entrepreneurs, farmers, manufacturers, retailers, service providers and the employees and families who depend on them.

The Chamber noted that supporting Canadian businesses does not mean turning away from longstanding American customers, suppliers and business partners. The Canadian and American economies remain deeply integrated, and tariffs and trade disruptions can create costs and uncertainty on both sides of the border.

The objective must be to strengthen Canada’s economic resilience while maintaining constructive business relationships and pursuing opportunities for long-term trade diversification. Opportunities for support are offered through Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (Regional Development Agencies-RDA)

Regional Tariff Response Initiative

The Government of Canada is expanding the Regional Tariff Response Initiative (RTRI), a \$1 billion, three-year program delivered through regional development agencies, to help small and medium-sized enterprises adapt to trade disruptions and tariff impacts. The initiative focuses on improving productivity, reducing costs, strengthening supply chains, and supporting market diversification, while enabling businesses to build resilience and pursue new opportunities in a changing global trade environment.

The Government of Canada Southern Ontario

Regional Tariff Response Initiative in Southern Ontario (Link)

Find Ontario Government Provincial Programs at [Available funding opportunities from the Ontario Government | ontario.ca](#) (Link)

Find other resources on the Chatham-Kent Economic Development website

Economic Development | Tariff Support (Link)

The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce will continue to listen to local businesses, communicate their experiences to decision-makers and work with municipal, provincial and national partners to advocate for practical measures that protect Canadian businesses and jobs.

Chatham-Kent has navigated significant economic challenges before. Through preparation, collaboration and a continued commitment to shopping local, loving local and supporting Canadian job makers, the community can respond to this challenge with confidence and resilience.

– 30 –

Media Contact:

Rory Ring
President and CEO
Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce
rory@chatham-kentchamber.ca
(519) 809-5440