



CHATHAM-KENT
CHAMBER
of
COMMERCE

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Chatham-Kent Chamber Calls for Decisive Trade Action and Local Economic Leadership

Chamber urges targeted protection for employers and challenges municipal candidates to make economic resilience a core election commitment

CHATHAM-KENT, ON - The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce is calling for a measured, coordinated and business-focused response following the breakdown of Canada-U.S. trade negotiations and the implementation of new U.S. tariffs.

The United States has imposed 50 per cent tariffs on approximately CDN\$28 billion in Canadian products. Canada has announced a dollar-for-dollar response and additional support for affected workers and businesses. Canadian and U.S. officials have offered different accounts of why talks failed; employers now face renewed uncertainty across North American trade.

For Chatham-Kent, the impact reaches beyond exporters. Agriculture, agribusiness, food processing, advanced manufacturing, automotive supply chains, logistics, construction and supporting services are connected to the U.S. market through customers, suppliers and critical inputs. Higher costs, disrupted supply chains, reduced orders and delayed investment can quickly put local jobs and community confidence at risk.

The Chamber supports Canada's responsibility to protect workers, businesses and long-term economic sovereignty. Tariffs and counter-tariffs, however, are not a durable substitute for predictable, rules-based trade.

"Canada should not accept an agreement at any price or on terms that weaken our long-term interests. At the same time, prolonged uncertainty carries a real cost for employers, workers and communities. Governments must act quickly to protect Canadian jobs, continue negotiations and ensure their response strengthens - rather than unintentionally weakens - our competitiveness."

Rory Ring, President and CEO, Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce

Required Government Action

The Chamber is urging the federal and provincial governments to act in four priority areas:

- **Provide immediate clarity and relief.** Confirm affected products, tariff classifications, implementation dates, customs requirements and available exemptions or remission processes.
- **Deliver targeted support.** Provide working capital, export assistance, workforce measures and incentives that keep production and investment in Canada.
- **Strengthen the domestic economy.** Remove interprovincial trade barriers, improve trade infrastructure and consider competitive Canadian suppliers in public procurement.
- **Continue negotiations and diversify markets.** Pursue a fair U.S. agreement while helping businesses expand across Canada and into other international markets.

Canadian countermeasures must be strategic and carefully targeted. Measures that increase the cost of essential machinery, components, agricultural inputs or materials used by Canadian businesses could deepen the harm they are intended to address.

Municipal Elections: Economic Resilience Must Be on the Ballot

Ontario's municipal elections will be held on October 26, 2026, following the August 21 close of nominations. The trade disruption reinforces why local economic resilience must be central to municipal campaigns across the province.

Municipal governments do not negotiate trade agreements, but their decisions directly affect whether employers can absorb external shocks, reinvest and create jobs. Candidates in Chatham-Kent and across Ontario should explain how they will:

- **Keep business costs competitive** through disciplined municipal budgets, predictable property taxes, the role development charges, fees, and user charges.
- **Make investment easier** through faster, transparent approvals and permitting, standardized interpretations and application of bylaws and project inspections, provision of investment-ready employment lands, and municipal investment in economic enabling infrastructure.
- **Strengthen the workforce and community** through housing, transportation, skills partnerships, public safety and reliable services.
- **Build resilient supply chains** through responsible procurement, economic development and regional partnerships that support local and Canadian suppliers and open new markets.

“Every candidate should be able to answer a basic question: how will your decisions make it easier, faster and more predictable to operate, invest and create jobs in your community? In a period of global uncertainty, a strong local economy is not a side issue - it is the foundation of a resilient community.”

Rory Ring, President and CEO, Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce

Business and Community Readiness

The Chamber is encouraging businesses to review customer and supplier concentration, contracts, product classifications, country-of-origin documentation, inventory, financing needs and alternative markets. Employers experiencing disruption should share changes in orders, costs, staffing, transportation or investment with the Chamber so advocacy is grounded in evidence.

Residents, institutions and businesses can strengthen local resilience by choosing competitive local and Canadian products and services. The Chamber cautions against panic or symbolic actions that unintentionally harm Canadian businesses. Chatham-Kent has repeatedly met disruption through collaboration, innovation and determination; that same thoughtful approach is required now.

The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce will continue working with local employers, chambers across Ontario and all levels of government to advocate for practical measures that protect Canadian jobs, investment and competitiveness.

About the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce

Since 1872, the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce has served as a non-partisan voice for business, connecting employers, advancing economic prosperity and advocating for the conditions required for businesses and communities across Chatham-Kent to succeed.

**MEDIA
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