BUILDING TRADES OF ALBERTA

August 31, 2026

Alberta Trade Advisory Council
c/o The Honourable Joseph Schow
Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration
Government of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta

Re: Building Trades of Alberta Submission on Federal Retaliatory Tariff Measures and Sector Impacts

Dear Members of the Alberta Trade Advisory Council:

On behalf of the Building Trades of Alberta (BTA) and the more than 60,000 skilled trades workers represented by our 19 affiliated local unions, I write to provide you with the perspective of Alberta's unionized skilled trades workforce on the proposed retaliatory tariff measures. Our members build and maintain the energy infrastructure on which this province depends. The integrated North American supply chains that support that work are now under acute strain.

We welcome the Government of Alberta's decision to seek structured advice from industry and labour. The comments below respond to the questions before the Council.

Perspective on the Proposed Retaliatory Measures and Sector Response

The Building Trades of Alberta is clear about the consequences of these tariffs. They raise project costs, disrupt deeply integrated supply chains, and threaten jobs throughout the construction and manufacturing sectors.

In response, BTA and its affiliates are working with all levels of government, contractors, owners, and other partners to grow and upskill the skilled trades workforce in Canada. That work includes growing apprenticeship intake and aligning labour supply with project schedules so that, as supply chains are reconfigured, our tradespeople are ready to deliver. Workforce development is the strategy we can control.

Products That Are Difficult to Substitute, and the Operational Cost of Switching

Several categories on the proposed retaliation lists cannot be readily replaced with Canadian or non-U.S. alternatives on a timeline that matches the needs of Alberta projects. Three categories are of particular concern.

<u>Components for appliances and HVAC systems.</u> These goods are subject to counter-tariffs in the 15–50 percent range. North American mechanical systems are designed to U.S. and Canadian codes, voltages, connection standards, and parts inventories.

<u>Tubes and steel prefabricated pipe.</u> These products are subject to a 50 percent tariff. They are foundational inputs to major industrial projects in Alberta. Domestic mill and fabrication capacity exists, but it is neither infinite nor immediately available at the specifications, diameters, and delivery windows that current projects require

<u>Oilsands maintenance turnarounds.</u> These occur within a strict window. Materials, prefabricated components, and specialized parts are procured months in advance. Supply and procurement disruptions would place operating plants in a state of precarity. If specified pipe, fittings, structural steel, or related components are delayed or repriced beyond the project envelope, this can cause an extended outage and deferred production.

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www.bta.ca

Federal Actions That Would Help This Sector Adapt

Extending targeted tariff relief that reaches workers. Existing and future relief must be designed to directly support the people who fabricate, install, and maintain the affected goods. Remission, work-sharing, employment insurance flexibility, and project-tied supports should be contingent on the retention and deployment of Canadian tradespeople.

Strengthen formal coordination with labour. The federal government should work more closely with the building trades through mechanisms such as a Labour Supply Coordinating Committee. Aligning project timelines, workforce availability, training seats, and mobility rules is the practical means of ensuring that Canadian tradespeople displaced or delayed by tariffs can be placed on the infrastructure, industrial, and energy work the country still needs to deliver.

Protect domestic capacity and keep major projects moving**.** Strengthening domestic supply chains, protecting Canadian jobs, and ensuring that major infrastructure, industrial, and energy projects proceed in a thoughtful, coordinated, and expedited manner is not a substitute for a negotiated settlement with the United States. It is the minimum required to prevent a trade dispute from becoming a construction-and-maintenance recession in Alberta.

Measures to Reduce Unintended Consequences of Retaliatory Tariffs

Retaliatory lists should be accompanied by an equally concrete mitigation program. In particular, the federal government should proceed without delay to fully implement its $7.5 billion investment in the Strategic Response Fund and the Canada Strong Diversification Fund.

Those instruments will only reduce unintended consequences if three conditions are met. First, intake and approval must be fast enough to match project schedules. Second, eligibility must reach the contractors, fabricators, and specialty suppliers who buy the tariffed items. Third, funding agreements should include labour commitments to ensure that Alberta tradespeople are employed and that training pipelines remain intact.

Advocacy in the United States in Response to the Section 338 Tariffs

Through our affiliation with Canada's Building Trades Unions and our relationship with North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU), our movement has been engaged on both sides of the border. NABTU has consistently warned against, and formally opposed, tariff measures of this kind, highlighting the harm they do to American and Canadian workers and businesses alike. That cross-border advocacy will continue.

The Building Trades of Alberta asks that the Council place the operational realities of construction and industrial maintenance costs, substitution limits, and immovable turnaround windows at the centre of its advice. If government, industry and labour work together, this sector can absorb a period of disruption without discarding the skilled workforce Alberta will need when projects resume at full pace.

Respectfully submitted,

T. Parker

Terry Parker
Executive Director
Building Trades of Alberta

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