



03 February 2024

Honourable Danielle Smith  
Premier, President of Executive Council  
Office of the Premier  
Executive Branch  
307 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6  
[premier@gov.ab.ca](mailto:premier@gov.ab.ca)

## **RE: It's time to pick a side. Team Canada needs Alberta**

Dear Premier Smith:

As a result of the Trump tariffs, Albertans, along with all other Canadians, are facing the imminent prospect of massive economic disruption and dislocation. Jobs will be lost. Investment will decline. Inflation will increase. It is the job of all Canadian governments (federal, provincial and municipal) and all Canadian institutions (business, labour and civil society) to meet this unprecedented and unprovoked attack collectively and in coordination.

On behalf of the 26 unions and 170,000 workers represented by the Alberta Federation of Labour, I offer these suggestions.

1. Please stop repeating Donald Trump's pretexts for attacking the Canadian economy as if they were true. It has become very clear that this isn't about fentanyl, immigration or even a trade imbalance between the US and Canada. Repeating misinformation gives it more power.
2. Please stop attacking our federal government and its policies during your frequent appearances on American right-wing TV (Fox, Newsmax etc.) Criticisms

of other orders of government are fair game during normal times, but these are not normal times. Your talking points are undermining Canada's bargaining power.

3. Please use your public platform to make it clear that Albertans have no interest in becoming the 51<sup>st</sup> state. President Trump's comments in this regard are not a joke, as you've suggested previously. By not forcefully and explicitly ruling out the idea of annexation, you are helping to keep the issue alive.
4. Please pair your efforts at diplomacy with policies that make it clear that there will be significant costs to attacking Canada. Put another way, please put an iron fist inside your velvet glove. Donald Trump is a bully. Weakness only emboldens bullies. Strength is the only language they understand.
5. With that in mind, we strongly encourage you to follow the lead of other provinces who have been using provincial government procurement policy to send a strong message to the Trump administration. Specifically, we urge you to immediately instruct Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC) to stop buying American products. We also urge you to start the process of cancelling other government contracts with American suppliers. We cannot be the only province that refuses to use non-tariff measures to respond Trump's attack on our economy and our sovereignty.
6. We also urge you to follow the lead of the federal government and many other provincial governments who have created multi-stakeholder committees to consult on how best to respond to the Trump threat. Who are you currently getting advice from? Who's at the table? Is there even a table? Oil and gas isn't the only important sector in the Alberta economy. We think your government should create a space for all of Alberta's diverse voices to be heard.
7. Finally, we urge you to acknowledge that Alberta has a unique and powerful tool that can be used in the fight to defend Canada from the Trump tariff attack. That tool is known as curtailment. Trump's decision to impose a lower tariff on energy shows that he knows that the US is vulnerable on energy – especially when it comes to feedstock for refineries in the Midwest. That gives Alberta leverage – perhaps more leverage than any other province. We urge you to use that leverage by pointing out publicly that Alberta could (and will, if necessary) curtail the

export of Alberta heavy crude to refineries in the US Midwest. Mexico played hardball and got Trump to back down. We need to do the same.

There has never been a more urgent need for Canadian governments to speak and act with one voice. Right now, it's clear that you are not fully on Team Canada. For the sake of our economy and our sovereignty, that needs to change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gil McGowan', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gil McGowan

President

Alberta Federation of Labour