

Canada – United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group
Canadian Section



Groupe interparlementaire
Canada – États-Unis
Section canadienne

Report of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

31st Pacific NorthWest Economic Region Annual Summit

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

July 24–27, 2022

REPORT

A. DELEGATION

From 24–27 July 2022, Senator Michael MacDonald, Co-Chair of the Canadian Section of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (IPG), led a delegation to the 31st annual summit of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER), held in Calgary, Alberta. The other delegates were Senators Rob Black, Jane Cordy, Patricia Duncan and Scott Tannas, and the following members of the House of Commons: John Barlow, MP, Lena Metlege Diab, MP, Stephanie Kusie, MP, Larry Maguire, MP, Dan Mazier, MP, Rob Morrison, MP, Maninder Sidhu, MP, and Len Webber, MP. The delegation was accompanied by David Chandonnet, the Canadian Section’s Executive Secretary, and Marie Dumont, Advisor to the Canadian Section.

B. THE EVENT

Established by statute in 1991, [PNWER](#) is a binational, regional, private–public partnership that includes five U.S. states – Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington – and three Canadian provinces and two territories – Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and Yukon. Its founding members are Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Alberta and British Columbia. Yukon became a member in 1999, followed by Saskatchewan in 2008 and the Northwest Territories in 2009.

PNWER’s goals are the following:

- coordinate provincial/territorial and state policies throughout the region;
- identify and promote “models of success”;
- serve as a conduit to exchange information;
- promote greater regional collaboration;
- enhance the competitiveness of the region in both domestic and international markets;
- leverage regional influence in Ottawa, Ontario and Washington, D.C.; and
- achieve continued economic growth while maintaining the region’s natural environment.

PNWER routinely holds two meetings each year: an annual summit in the summer and an economic leadership forum in the fall.

C. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CANADA–UNITED STATES INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

PNWER’s annual summit provides members of the IPG’s Canadian Section with the opportunity to discuss regional cross-border initiatives with state, provincial and territorial legislators, as well as engage with private and non-profit organizations that are working to strengthen economic relations between Canada and the United States.

The panel discussions at PNWER’s 2022 annual summit enabled the delegates to learn more about Canada–U.S. relations and to identify topics where increased collaboration could be mutually beneficial, including in relation to border security, innovation, livestock health, infrastructure and disaster resilience.

D. ACTIVITIES DURING THE ANNUAL SUMMIT

The event included policy tours, keynote addresses and panel sessions. This report summarizes some of the salient points that speakers made during the event.

1. Policy Tour to Christina Lake

Delegates visited Cenovus' oil sands operation at Christina Lake near Conklin, Alberta. As an *in situ* mine, rather than an open pit mine, the wells are drilled to extract bitumen in a way that reduces emissions and water usage over time.

2. Breakfast Keynote: A Diplomatic Welcome

David Cohen, U.S. Ambassador to Canada

- The strength of the U.S.–Canada relationship is based on the countries working together to solve disagreements, including the NEXUS application delays.
- Oil sands operators are taking efforts to decarbonize the process of producing oil.
- Critical minerals are indeed “critical,” and countries are competing to extract, refine and use them. Efforts to extract and refine them more quickly must be market-driven.
- China does not operate under the same regulatory constraints as Canada and the United States. Federal governments in Canada and the United States need to provide regulatory certainty.
- The *Columbia River Treaty* should be modernized. Negotiations will continue in August and it is hoped that they will go well.
- Small and medium-sized businesses comprise 99% of businesses and provide jobs for millions.

Kirsten Hillman, Canadian Ambassador to the United States

- Getting energy infrastructure, including pipelines, approved in both Canada and the United States is difficult. The cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline expansion leads Canada to ask itself: what does this difficulty in approving energy infrastructure mean for Canada?
- Canadian energy will lead the world towards a transition to net-zero emissions.
- Concerning critical minerals, Canada should be more than just the location where the minerals are extracted. The country should develop capacity to refine critical minerals and should be involved in the related supply chain.
- While Canada has more than one-half of the world's critical minerals, China currently owns 80% of the global capacity for processing critical minerals. In the past, the world has relied on overproduction and overexploitation of these critical resources, and these practices should not be relied upon moving forward.
- Collaboration between Canada and the United States regarding water management is critically important; droughts and floods do not stop at the shared borders.
- While it is not always easy to ensure that Canada's messages are delivered to and understood by decision makers in Washington, D.C., it is important to make connections with people.

3. Reunited: The Future of Border Travel

Ted Soebel, DHS Attaché to Canada, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

- The communication between the United States and Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic was “amazing,” and helped to ensure coordination between the two countries. The flow of commercial traffic was maintained, healthcare workers were able to cross the shared borders, and supply chains facilitated the movement of goods.
- The pandemic has provided several lessons, including the need for increased coordination by both countries concerning shared borders located in geographically isolated communities.
- The United States has completed the implementation of a simplified arrival process at border crossings; facial recognition technology is used to make a comparison with a traveller’s passport. Since the implementation of this technology, close to 1,500 people have been caught committing fraud.
- There are some legal questions concerning remote interviews for the NEXUS program.
- The United States’ Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is leading the way in adopting digital identity technology. This technology confirms someone’s identity, allowing TSA officers to focus on other security concerns.

Allison Gifford, Senior Manager, Public Policy, Amazon

- Throughout the pandemic, and despite many challenges, the movement of goods has continued.
- During the pandemic, the definition of “essential worker” has been expanded to include those who move goods.
- Cooperation between Canada and the United States can help to prevent future shocks at the shared borders. During the pandemic, when official governmental policies were somewhat uncertain, communities and trade associations shared knowledge about crossing the border.

Laura Dawson, Executive Director, Future Borders Coalition

- Launched in 2018, the Future Borders Coalition is a bilateral and multimodal organization that proposes research-based policies to decision makers. The coalition is dedicated to building better Canada–U.S. borders for travel and trade.
- A border between countries should be streamlined, accessible, strong, secure, and focused on those who travel and trade.
- Technological innovations must be user-centric and accessible to everyone.
- Priorities for border innovation are the following:
 - Focus on minimizing delays and, when making a new policy, assume that there will be harmonization between countries unless there is a reason not to harmonize.
 - Strengthen existing platforms, such as the NEXUS program, and simplify mobile applications, including ArriveCAN.
 - Leverage digital technologies by integrating all paper-based documents.

Solomon Wong, President and Chief Executive Officer, InterVISTAS Consulting

- There are many examples of border coordination that originated in the Pacific Northwest region, such as the trusted traveller programs that began in the 1990s.
- During the pandemic, there have been major developments in technology in both Canada and the United States. For example, in Georgia, Maryland and Arizona, a drivers' licence can exist on an iPhone as privacy-protected identification.
- The NEXUS remote renewals pilot program faces some barriers, and the Canadian and U.S. governments should cooperate on improving this binational program.

4. Toward a North American Energy Security and Sustainability Framework

Mac Van Wielingen, Founder and Partner, ARC Financial Corp.

- In Europe, energy policy has failed because it has become consumed in climate policy.
- Environmental, social and governance principles for corporations must be expanded to include economics; otherwise, the principles are too narrow in perspective.

David Wilkins, Partner, Nelson Mullins

- The Biden Administration will pay a political price for the increased cost of living; for voters, inflation is the most important issue.
- In the upcoming U.S. midterm elections, the Democratic party is likely to lose seats in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.
- In Washington, D.C., legislators should be made aware that their citizens want access to Canada's secure energy supply. Canada needs to communicate that information to the legislators.

Honourable Sonya Savage, Minister of Energy, Government of Alberta

- Russia has weaponized energy, and the result is discussions in Europe about rationing natural gas.
- Energy policy needs to be rebalanced to focus on energy security.
- There should be a realistic pathway towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions, rather than simply a goal. To achieve net-zero emissions, Canada's federal government should stop establishing climate goals that cannot be met.

5. Forest for the Trees: Climate Change and Active Forest Management

Dan Lux, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Forest Division, Alberta Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development

- In Alberta, 60% of land is forest and approximately 17,500 people are employed in the forestry sector.
- Alberta's forestry sector exports about 50% of its forest products, with 80% of those exports destined for the United States.
- There are several ways that Canada's forestry sector will contribute to achieving net-zero emissions, including the following:

- using wood in building products to displace more carbon-intensive products; and
- managing disturbances, such as fires and pests, so that forests can continue to act as carbon sinks.
- The logging sector has a shortage of loggers. To attract more loggers, there should be a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.
- At present, 12% of people working in Canada's forestry sector are women.
- Government policies can help to make it easier to salvage wood after forest fires, such as by reducing royalties on that wood.
- When governments open a tender for project proposals, the proposals should include a section on benefits for Indigenous communities.

Jackie Clayton, Mayor, City of Grande Prairie, Alberta

- Alberta's forestry sector has balanced the ebbs and flows of the province's oil and gas sector by providing long-term, stable jobs.
- In Grande Prairie, Alberta, the forestry sector contributes approximately \$120 million to the city's economy because of employment.
- Grande Prairie is on the edge of a labour shortage crisis, so there are opportunities to attract immigrants to the area's forestry sector.

Brandis Arsenault, Director, Sustainability Performance, West Fraser Timber

- Corporations, including West Fraser, need to build for the future. West Fraser is working to educate communities about the benefits of the forestry sector.
- The Canadian federal government's ambition to plant 2 billion trees must be carefully planned. Less than 1% of trees are harvested every year.

6. Moving Towards Decarbonization of our Integrated Electric/Natural Gas Systems and the Role of Hydrogen in the Future

Speakers: Brian Vassjo, Capital Power; David Alonso, Mitsubishi Power; Dale Nally, Associate Minister of Natural Gas and Electricity, Government of Alberta; and Bob Myles, ATCO Ltd.

- Several themes are valid concerning the development of all types of energy, including the following:
 - The "enemy" is not the type of energy used, but rather the associated emissions.
 - Affordability is an important consideration regarding energy use.
 - Many energy solutions will be required to reflect various customers' preferences and needs.
 - The cost to decarbonize the economy is high, and it exceeds the amount that the private sector alone can finance.
 - Natural gas has many uses, and it will play an important long-term role in the energy sector.

- The energy transition does not necessarily mean moving away from energy sectors in which significant amounts have already been invested, like oil and gas. For instance, hydrogen can be blended with natural gas. It is important to look at opportunities to reuse existing oil and gas infrastructure.
- Hydrogen has a lot of potential, and it will create great opportunities for both Canada and the United States. Hydrogen combustion is not a new technology; it has been used for a long time but it has not been used widely because it is currently hard to scale it. It is important to discuss scaling hydrogen power while managing costs.
- At present, the United States has 1,600 miles of hydrogen pipelines.
- While there is strong collaboration between Canada and the United States in the hydrogen sector, various government bodies and the private sector should collaborate with a view to sharing similar objectives.
- Policy development for the energy sector is now more thoughtful than it has been historically. Policy makers have been more receptive to the private sector than in the past, but it is important for them to work in harmony, regardless of their political affiliations.
- Businesses that are developing technologies in the energy sector need a high degree of regulatory certainty from regulatory bodies. Without regulatory certainty, businesses will bring their capital to jurisdictions characterized by high levels of regulatory certainty.

7. In Flux - the geopolitical impacts on our global supply chains

Edward Alden, Ross Distinguished Visiting Professor, Western Washington University

- A dominant feature of the United States' foreign policy has been integration of China and Russia into the global economic system. However, the 2008 financial crisis cast doubt on the merits of that model.
- Over the past 30 years, successive U.S. governments have encouraged businesses to invest abroad, believing that increasing trade with countries would help to improve the environmental, social and governance standards in those countries. However, in many countries, international trade and investment have not led to higher standards in some areas.
- There are growing concerns about the effects of climate change, and consumers do not always trust environmental, social and governance commitments made by companies.

Spencer Cohen, Principal and Founder, High Peak Strategy LLC

- The demand for services decreased during the early stages of pandemic. At present, there is rising demand for goods, coupled with a shortage of goods.
- Many sectors are vulnerable to intellectual property theft. There are measures in place to prevent such theft, and legislation often focuses on preventing theft by the People's Republic of China (PRC). There are efforts to decouple the U.S. economy from the PRC, and to "friend shore" with likeminded countries.

Christopher Sands, Director, Canada Institute, Wilson Center

- Increasingly, consumers want to know about the supply chain for the products they are purchasing, especially concerning forced labour and environmental issues.
- The United States has adopted the *Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act* to address concerns about supply chains, although the legislation's effectiveness has not been assessed.
- Concerning the PRC, the United States has moved from a position of engagement to confrontation to containment.

8. Economic Development Challenges in a Volatile Arctic

Sandy Silver, Premier, Government of Yukon

- Arctic security and national defence are issues that matter to all Canadians.
- At one time, Canada's federal government asserted Arctic sovereignty by relocating people living elsewhere in the country to more Northern communities.
- Most self-governing First Nations in Canada are in Yukon, and governments must invest in these communities.
- Canada is committed to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and the statement "nothing about us without us" applies to Indigenous communities.
- During the pandemic, Canadian governments, provincial and territorial premiers, first ministers and the Prime Minister communicated more frequently than at any other point in history.
- In recent years, Russia's approach has been relatively more aggressive concerning navigable waters in the Northwest Passage.
- The Arctic Council is not meeting at present; Russia currently holds its presidency.

Lieutenant Governor Keven Meyer, State of Alaska

- In the 1870s, the United States purchased Alaska from Russia, making the United States one of the eight Arctic countries.
- The United States has been slow to focus on the Arctic, but the country has started to be more active in the region by making public investments, building national security infrastructure, and developing Arctic-focused energy and environment policies.
- Russia continues to invest heavily in offshore oil and gas platforms in the Arctic; while they are doing so, they are building up their military, allegedly to protect their oil and gas assets. In contrast, the current U.S. administration does not allow the development of new offshore oil and gas projects.
- Like Russia, China is building up its Arctic connections; as well, it wishes to be an Arctic country. Securing access to research projects and new transportation routes is part of China's motivation for its focus on the Arctic.
- There are eight large military bases in Alaska, and Anchorage, Alaska, will be the home of the Department of Defense's Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies. This center will support three U.S. combat commands: the U.S. command, the European command and the Indo-Pacific Command.

- Seventy percent of Alaska is inaccessible by road.
- When compared to the states in the continental United States, Alaska is far behind in terms of infrastructure.
- Accessible broadband Internet is very important for economic and health purposes.
- There are 12 Indigenous corporations that produce minerals, and oil and gas in the Alaska, and they hire Indigenous people to work on these projects.
- The Bering Strait now has more than 300 transits per year, providing opportunities for shipping and tourism. However, if there were an oil spill, neither Russia nor the United States would be equipped to manage such a disaster. The closest U.S. icebreaker that could respond to such a spill is in Washington State.

Minister Caroline Wawzonek, Minister Responsible for Finance; Industry, Tourism and Investment; and the Status of Women, and Member of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories for Yellowknife South

- Federal, provincial and territorial ministers across Canada have been meeting more frequently during the pandemic. During a crisis, through collaboration, much can be accomplished quickly.
- Economic self-sufficiency can help to build Arctic sovereignty for the communities and the people in the North.
- Investments in the North help to connect northern communities to communities in the South.
- The Northwest Territories is not connected to southern Canada's energy grid.
- There is a strong resurgence in diamond and gold mining in the Northwest Territories. Because Russia is another country that has diamond and gold deposits, the current interest in Canada's supply is not a surprise.
- The Northwest Territories has the world's largest known tungsten deposit outside of China. With instability in other countries, there is an opportunity to access a stable source of tungsten from the Northwest Territories.
- The Northwest Territories has some of the largest deposits of liquid natural gas anywhere in the world. However, it is difficult to transport this resource because there is not a deep-water port in Canada's North.

9. Bridging Silos to Catalyze Decarbonization and Resilience of Buildings

Andrew Pape-Salmon, Adjunct Professor, University of Victoria

- Decarbonizing Canada's economy will exacerbate inequality because not everyone can afford the technology that makes decarbonization possible, such as with electric vehicles. Energy efficiency is a way to make the transition to net-zero emissions affordable and equitable.
- The buildings sector is one of Canada's most heavily regulated sectors, and all levels of government – including Indigenous – are involved in this regulation.

- Engineers have a responsibility to identify risks and mitigation solutions, and they should take a more active role in creating solutions to decarbonize the buildings sector, particularly for existing buildings.
- Regulations should enable engineers to innovate and optimize performance, rather than prescribe solutions

Soheil Asgarpour, President, Canadian Academy of Engineering

- Engineers have a role to play in contributing to social, environmental and technical performance in buildings.
- The Canadian Academy of Engineering wants all new buildings to be net-zero emissions by 2050, while being more resilient.
- Skilled labour professionals and engineers should be trained to apply their skills to manage the transition toward net-zero emissions.
- Net-zero resilient buildings are one of the five “pieces of the net-zero puzzle”; the others are energy, transportation, industry and resources.

Harshan Radhakrishnan, Manager, Climate Change and Sustainability Initiatives, Engineers and Geoscientists British Columbia

- Engineers and Geoscientists British Columbia is the regulatory body for approximately 40,000 professional engineers and geoscientists. Because its first responsibility is to act in the public interest, it has made commitments to acting on climate change, and promoting equity, diversity, inclusion and Indigenous reconciliation, among other goals.
- More than 200 schools in British Columbia have been seismically retrofitted, and Engineers and Geoscientists British Columbia offers resources to ensure that such retrofits meet code requirements.
- Regulators, policy makers and civil society organizations at the sub-national levels must assume some responsibility for decarbonizing the economy.

Paul Chang, Provincial Building Administrator, Alberta Municipal Affairs

- Because of recent changes in Canada to the national model code development process, there is a partnership between the National Research Council, and the federal, provincial and territorial, to coordinate processes, that allow provinces and territories to develop their own codes if they meet the requirements of the national standards.
- There are efforts to harmonize building regulations among and between provinces and territories.
- In addition to harmonizing building regulations, system capacity needs to be developed so that all stakeholders can meet the regulatory requirements.

Evan Reis, Executive Director, United States Resiliency Council

- Resilient buildings are central to a healthy and well-functioning community, both before and after natural disasters.

- If building resiliency is not considered as part of green design, the investments in that building are at risk from natural disasters. For truly sustainable design, buildings need to be green and resilient.
- When developing rating systems for resilient buildings, the U.S. Resiliency Council considers equity, the economy and the environment. These rating systems help to quantify the elements that have been incorporated into a building's design and construction. Quantifying such elements is useful for insurance companies.
- In the *2022 California Budget Act*, grants are available to people living in seismically vulnerable buildings that are easy to retrofit.

10. Feeding the Future: Food Security, Infrastructure, and Expanding Global Markets

Danny Heck, Lieutenant Governor, State of Washington

- Canada is Washington State's primary trading partner, and the state is the most trade-driven among all 50 U.S. states.
- The United States has not had to worry about wars along the borders it shares with Canada, thereby allowing it to develop and prosper.
- The U.S. Northwest Seaport Alliance Port competes with the ports of Prince Rupert and Vancouver, B.C., yet there is an element of "cooperation" because these U.S. and Canadian ports collaborate in some areas, such as the establishment of common air quality standards.

Angela Marshall Hofmann, Vice President, International Trade and Supply Chain Resiliency, Sandler, Travis and Rosenberg

- In the United States, this is a time of historic infrastructure growth. Substantial investments are being made in all types of infrastructure, including roads, ports, buildings and broadband.
- Countries are approaching trade differently than before by focusing on collaboration with allies, referred to as "friend shoring."
- Consumers want supply chain transparency. For example, they desire information about how a good is made, who made it, and whether it was made without forced labour and with respect for the environment.

Tyler McCann, Managing Director, Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute

- The world needs more North American food.
- Russia's most recent invasion of Ukraine has put a renewed focus on food security.
- The countries that can produce more food should be doing so. Climate change, which is making agriculture more difficult in some regions, presents new opportunities for increased production in Canada.
- There is a critical role for agricultural infrastructure, both "soft infrastructure," which represents the rules that regulate food production and transportation, and "hard infrastructure," which represents the physical means that make it possible to transport food.

11. Invasive Species: Introduction to Invasive Species Policy and Funding Models

Speakers: Justin Bush, Washington Invasive Species Council; Representative Terry Gestrin, Idaho House of Representatives; Tom Woolf, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Jeff Long, Government of Manitoba – Wildlife and Fisheries Branch; Tammy Davis, Alaska Department of Fish and Game; and Matt Tyee, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment

- Aquatic invasive species – such as quagga and zebra mussels, and mollusks – are very difficult and costly to eliminate once they have invaded a body of water.
- To address the problem of aquatic invasive species, regulators need to detect these species quickly and implement a rapid response to eliminate them from a body of water.
- Aquatic invasive species affect Indigenous peoples by threatening traditional lifestyles and knowledge about the natural environment. For example, such species can make it impossible to fish for food, or swim in bodies of water.
- Engaging citizens to help with the detection of aquatic invasive species can lead an issue to be resolved more quickly than if a regulator alone is responsible for detecting the species.

12. Are we there Yet?: Regional Economic Recovery and the Future of our Workforce

Christopher Laney, Senior Workforce Strategist, Lightcast

- At present, there is a demographic crisis: declining fertility rates, accelerated retirement rates, and low labour force participation and unemployment rates.
- When compared to the pre-pandemic period, immigration will be a less reliable source of labour because of rising global competition for skilled individuals.
- The current low unemployment rates in the United States and Canada cannot be attributed only to the after-effects of the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, unemployment rates in both countries were at a level that is similar to the current rates.
- In the United States, people are relying heavily on credit cards and savings to pay for their expenses. Consumer debt has returned to pre-pandemic levels and consumer savings are lower than prior to the pandemic.

13. Now Hiring: Addressing Tourism Challenges in Workforce, Border, and Infrastructure

Minister Randy Boissonnault, Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Government of Canada

- As a proportion of national gross domestic product, Canada's tourism sector contributes more than the automotive sector.
- The Government of Canada is working on a federal tourism growth strategy.
- As the pandemic wanes, there is an increased demand for travel and tourism. This demand is reflected in a high number of passport applications.

- Canada welcomes all people, including LGBTQ+ peoples, and offers authentic Indigenous tourism experiences.
- With a highly vaccinated population, Canada is an attractive location to visit.

Barry Penner, Queen's Council, Legal Advisor, Cruise Lines International Association

- During the pandemic, the cruise sector has implemented procedures designed to protect the health and safety of passengers and crews.
- Unlike the United States, Canada did not open its ports to cruising in 2021. This policy difference led the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to pass legislation that allowed U.S. cruise ships to bypass Canadian ports.
- The cruise sector is a significant source of tourism revenue for both Canada and the United States. Alaska is a top cruising destination for U.S. citizens, with passengers stopping in locations along Canada's West Coast.

Paul Nursey, President and Chief Executive Officer, Destination Greater Victoria

- The "two-nation vacation" is a principle that can encourage travel in both Canada and the United States, and can attract international visitors.
- In the Pacific Northwest region, there are more than 1 million jobs in the tourism sector.
- Entrepreneurship is the bedrock of the tourism sector, and supports communities and neighborhoods.
- In Victoria, B.C., when compared to Canadian visitors to that city, visitors from the United States and international visitors have tended to spend 70% and 133% more, respectively.

Michelle Stennett, State Senator, Idaho State Senate

- Some from the baby boomer generation are remaining in the workforce longer than expected or are returning to the workforce following retirement. Many of them cannot retire due to a lack of savings.
- Youth today grew up in at a time when they saw their parents' jobs being outsourced, and they have experienced such situations as the dot com bubble.
- Since the pandemic has started to wane, the hospitality sector has not recovered as quickly as some other sectors.
- Due to labour shortages, a number of restaurants are not fully staffed, and they have not been able to open for the same number of hours as prior to the pandemic.

Laurie Trautman, Director, Border Policy Research Institute

- At present, there are many challenges along the borders between Canada and the United States. There is a lack of predictability in relation to crossing the borders, and businesses and travellers do not like unpredictability.
- Because more knowledge and effort are now required, fewer individuals are crossing the borders shared by Canada and the United States.

- Digitalization can improve border crossing processes, but this digitalization should not create a digital divide.

David Goldstein, Chief Executive Officer, Travel Alberta

- The outcome of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks was a “lost decade” of coordination between Canada and the United States concerning border harmonization. A Schengen Area¹ –style agreement between the countries could facilitate travel between them.
- Although there are small issues to resolve concerning NEXUS, there are also larger, aspirational ideas that policy makers should consider for improving border crossings.

14. Health and the Economy: Lessons from the pandemic in economic resiliency

Vic Adamowicz, Professor and Vice Dean, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Alberta

- Lockdown policies are extremely costly for the economy. However, strict lockdown procedures in the immediate term can help to reduce future costs.
- According to research by the One Society Network, early COVID-19 vaccination uptake can avoid between \$22 billion and \$35 billion in losses across Canada.

Andrea Brocklebank, Executive Researcher, Beef Cattle Research Council

- The pandemic led to significant shifts in consumption patterns. Restaurants and chefs adapted, and consumers became more interested in the source of their food.
- During the early stages of the pandemic, food processing plants implemented strong public health measures and responded quickly to virus outbreaks. As well, animal welfare and producer viability were part of the core discussions, with collaboration occurring among all of Canada’s seven cattle producer organizations.
- The pandemic has required the use of remote auditing for certification of certain types of beef. The remote auditing has been particularly helpful in reaching farmers and ranchers in remote communities, even as pandemic-related restrictions have been reduced or eliminated.

Andrew Gibbons, Vice President, Government Relations and Regulatory Affairs, Westjet

- Airlines were severely affected by the pandemic. The airline sector conducts daily risk assessments to determine if it is safe for a plane to fly.
- In Canada, during the early stages of the pandemic, travel was politicized as an activity that was dangerous. As a result, many people in the travel sector lost their jobs, resulting in economic hardship.
- Canada’s restrictions in response to the pandemic distinguished between land borders and air borders. None of Canada’s 117 land borders with the United States were closed

¹ The Schengen Area comprises 28 European countries that have agreed to eliminate passport and other types of border control at their borders.

during the pandemic. In contrast, with the exception of four major international airports, all air travel hubs in Canada were closed to international travel.

Noelle Becker, Executive Director, Ministry of Labour and Immigration, Government of Alberta

- The pandemic has had sudden and severe impacts.
- In May 2020, Alberta’s unemployment rate peaked at 15.3%.
- At the beginning of the pandemic, Alberta’s Jobs Now program provided a hiring incentive up to \$25,000 for any new position created by an employer. Over time, the program was adapted based on employer feedback. The program’s last intake has ended, and a program evaluation has begun.
- Alberta’s demand for labour has continued to increase and the number of job vacancies exceeds pre-pandemic levels.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Michael L. MacDonald, Senator,
Co-Chair,

Hon. John McKay, P.C., M.P.,
Co-Chair,

Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

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Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION

Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

ACTIVITY

31st Pacific NorthWest Economic Region Annual Summit

DESTINATION

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

DATES

July 24–27, 2022

DELEGATION

SENATE

Hon. Robert Black
Hon. Jane Cordy
Hon. Patricia Duncan
Hon. Michael L. MacDonald
Hon. Scott Tannas

HOUSE OF
COMMONS

John Barlow
Lena Metlege Diab
Stephanie Kusie
Larry Maguire
Dan Mazier
Rob Morrison
Maninder Sidhu
Len Webber

STAFF

David Chandonnet, Association Secretary
Marie Dumont, Advisor
Sarah Lemelin-Bellerose, Advisor

TRANSPORTATION	\$9,174.53
ACCOMMODATION	\$8,043.04
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$2,646.85
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS	\$11,649.08
REVENUES	(1,102.04)
TOTAL	\$30,411.46