



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 23, 2011

CANADIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS ATTEND MEETING OF EASTERN STATE LEGISLATORS

From August 7-10, 2011, the Honourable John McKay, P.C., M.P., Vice-Chair, led a delegation of members of the Canadian Section of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (IPG) to the 51st annual meeting of the Eastern Regional Conference (ERC) in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The other members of the delegation were the Honourable Senator Terry Mercer and Ms. Wai Young, M.P.

“I would like to congratulate the event organizers for putting together an outstanding program for our American guests. I’m sure my Nova Scotia colleague, Senator Mercer, agrees that the very best of Halifax has been showcased,” said Mr. McKay. “I think these meetings are important means by which we can strengthen the mutually beneficial relationship between Canada and the United States. According to recent figures, more than 1.6 million jobs in the 11 ERC states rely on Canada-U.S. trade. Annual merchandise trade between Canada and these states was recently valued at about US\$86 billion: about US\$30 billion was exported from these states to Canada, while they imported more than US\$56 billion from Canada. Recent data suggest that, in a twelve-month period, Canadians made more than 7 million visits to the ERC states and spent more than US\$1.8 billion, while residents of these states made more than 3.9 million visits to Canada and spent about US\$1.5 billion.”

Senator Mercer added: “It’s good to have these meetings north of the border on occasion in order to highlight some of the things that we do well in Canada. We are very serious about being open for business here in Nova Scotia, and we have been trying to get our American friends to focus on that. I am particularly proud of our very large university base, which is a strategic economic asset for North America. The technological and professional resources provided by our universities play an integral role in strengthening North America’s economic competitiveness.”

Ms. Young concluded: “The presentations and discussions at the ERC meeting were interesting and timely, and covered a variety of issues of importance to Canada-U.S. relations. As a federal Member of Parliament, I was pleased to meet with legislators from other governments to get a sense of how our decisions in Ottawa can affect the regional economies across Canada. I think it is critical that federal parliamentarians continue to have a strong presence in provincial-state exchanges in order to maintain the deeply intertwined relationship between Canada and the United States.”

The ERC is a regional association of state legislators from 19 member jurisdictions from Canada and the United States (see Appendix A). By facilitating cooperation among its member jurisdictions, the ERC promotes multi-state or region-wide solutions to the problems and challenges facing state and provincial legislators. Information on the ERC is available at www.csgeast.org.

It should be noted that the views expressed in this news release are specific to the Canadian Section of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group and, as such, may not reflect the views of our United States counterparts.

The Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group aims to find points of convergence in respective national policies, to initiate dialogue on points of divergence, to encourage the exchange of information and to promote better understanding among legislators on shared issues of concern. Additional information on the Group can be found at www.parl.gc.ca/ia/us.

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