

Canada - United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group
Canadian Section



Groupe interparlementaire
Canada - États-Unis
Section canadienne

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting
its participation at the Canadian/American Border Trade
Alliance Conference (BTA)**

Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

**Washington, D.C., United States of America
September 23-25, 2012**

Report

DELEGATION MEMBERS AND STAFF

On Tuesday, September 25, 2012, Mr. Gord Brown, M.P., House of Commons Co-Chair represented the Canadian Section of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (IPG) at the fall meeting of the Canadian/American (Can/Am) Border Trade Alliance, where he was invited to address meeting participants.

THE EVENT

The Can/Am Border Trade Alliance (BTA) holds two meetings each year: in the spring in Ottawa and in the fall in Washington, D.C. The BTA is a coalition of businesses, public-sector organizations and individuals with an interest in bilateral trade and tourism. Its mission is to maximize commercial activity and ensure continued growth in cross-border trade as well as efficient and productive border-crossing capabilities.

During the fall meeting, sessions with the following titles were scheduled to be held:

- Customs and Border Protection
- Brokers and Logistics Panel
- Federal Highway Administration
- CAN/AM Border Trade Alliance Technology Monitoring
- The Canadian Perspective
- Field Operations – Customs and Border Protection
- U.S. – Canada Energy
- CBP Centers of Excellence and Expertise
- Canada – U.S. Border Briefing
- View from Congress
- Alberta Update, including Oil Sands, Energy Overview and Insight

Attendees at the event included private-sector representatives involved in a number of tourism, transportation and trade-related activities as well as representatives of a variety of US and Canadian federal departments and the Canadian Embassy in Washington.

DELEGATION OBJECTIVES FOR THE EVENT

The Canadian Section of the IPG has a long association with the BTA, and members of the Section sometimes attend both the BTA's fall and spring meetings. Given the BTA's focus, attendance at the meetings provides members with an important opportunity to gain insight about problems being experienced by businesses and individuals in respect

of trade and tourism as well as about efforts and actions by governments in both countries to address these problems.

The Canadian Section's House of Commons Co-Chair, Mr. Gord Brown, M.P., spoke about the Section's activities since the BTA's 2012 spring meeting.

At this meeting, as at other BTA meetings, members of the Canadian Section benefitted from the opportunity to interact with, and learn from, private- and public-sector organizations and individuals who deal with border issues on a daily basis.

Attendance at the BTA meetings also provides members with an opportunity to inform others about the range of actions taken by the Section in respect of shared bilateral goals as well as differences, especially through the invitation that is typically given to the Canadian Senate and House of Commons Co-Chairs and/or Vice-Chairs of the Canadian Section to make remarks about the Section's activities and priorities. This was the primary focus of Mr. Gord Brown's attendance at this conference as he attended primarily to deliver his address.

Annexed as "Appendix A" is the speech delivered by Mr. Gord Brown, M.P. at the conference.

Appendix A

SPEAKING POINTS FOR MR. GORD BROWN, M.P., CO-CHAIR, CANADA-UNITED STATES INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

FALL MEETING OF THE CANADIAN/AMERICAN (CAN/AM) BORDER TRADE ALLIANCE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTRODUCTION

Thanks very much, Jim, for that kind introduction. I'd like to begin by thanking Jim for both his ongoing hard work on important issues and this invitation to once again share, with all of you, the latest information about the summer activities of the Canadian Section of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group, or IPG, and about what we hope to accomplish in the coming months. As always, it is great to be here and to see all of you.

I should also, at this time, bring to you the regrets of both my Senate Co-Chair, Senator Johnson, who is unable to be with you today, and Senator Michael MacDonald, one of the IPG's Vice-Chairs, who was to be here in place of Senator Johnson but who, as it turns out, is also unable to be with you. I know that Senator Johnson is hopeful that she will be provided with an opportunity to speak with you at the BTA's spring meeting in Ottawa.

THE SUMMER ACTIVITIES

With that, let me begin by outlining the Group's activities since I last spoke with you in May in Ottawa.

Just after the BTA conference, a number of Canadian Senators and I travelled to Washington for a **meeting with U.S. Senators**. The meeting was hosted by our U.S. Senate Co-Chair, Minnesota's senior Senator – Amy Klobuchar – and she was ably assisted by Idaho's senior Senator – Mike Crapo, who is a former U.S. Senate Co-Chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Group. This meeting was the first in a new format – all topics were discussed in a plenary session rather than in concurrent topic-focused sessions, the meeting – with the exception of me – occurred exclusively among Senators, and the meeting was held in a national capital, which is something that hasn't happened in decades. While our time together was productive, and while we were happy to have so many U.S. Senators drop by throughout our day-long meeting, I think the consensus view was that we will try to re-establish at least one part of the former approach: having

members from the Senate and from the House in each country meet together to discuss issues of shared importance. Certainly, that is the goal, and it is something that my Senate Co-Chair, Senator Johnson, is likely to pursue with Senator Klobuchar relatively soon.

Shortly after the D.C. meeting, one of the Canadian Section's vice-chairs – Rick Dykstra – attended the annual meeting of the **SouthEastern United States-Canadian Provinces Alliance**. The business program at the meeting this year was co-chaired by a long-time friend to Canada, the United States' former Ambassador, David Wilkins. And another highly respected friend to Canada – the BTA's Jim Phillips – served as the moderator of a session focused on efforts to ensure efficient bilateral trade in a tightened security environment. I think that the attendance at these meetings by U.S. governors and Canadian premiers indicates the group's credibility and its perceived ability to come up with practical solutions to the challenges faced as the member states and provinces attempt to do business with each other. According to Rick, the B2B, or business-to-business, meetings that occur are particularly useful in bringing about improved business opportunities, synergies, efficiencies and prosperity. I know that a great many are looking forward to next year's meeting, which will be hosted in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Shortly following the meeting of the SouthEastern United States-Canadian Provinces Alliance, members of the Canadian Section attended the annual meeting of the **Western Governors Association**, which is always a valuable opportunity to hear about issues that are important to the western region of North America. This year, the meeting was chaired by Governor Christine Gregoire, who is a long-standing friend of Canada and is particularly committed to working with the premier of British Columbia in resolving issues. I know that many of you are very aware of the instrumental role that she played in working with Canada on the enhanced driver's licence initiative and a range of Winter Olympic issues, among others.

In the month of July, representatives of the Group attended the **Pacific NorthWest Economic Region** – or PNWER – meeting in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, the summer meeting of the **National Governors Association** in Williamsburg, Virginia, and all four regional meetings of the Council of State Governments: the **CSG-WEST** meeting in Edmonton, Alberta, the first occasion on which the group's meeting was held outside the United States; the **Midwestern Legislative Conference** meeting in Cleveland, Ohio; the **Eastern Regional Conference** meeting in Atlantic City, New Jersey; and the **Southern Legislative Conference** meeting in Charleston, West Virginia.

A number of these meetings provided notable opportunities for the Canadian Section to pursue its goals and to work with American legislators, business groups in both

countries, and others with a view to enhancing prosperity for residents and businesses in North America. For example, at the PNWER meeting, a representative of the IPG – Senator Raynell Andreychuk, who chairs the Canadian Senate Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee – chaired an invitation-only session focused on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP. Canada will be formally joining the negotiations in October, and will be at the negotiating table in December for the 15th round of negotiations. At the CSG-WEST meeting, we were fortunate to have Rick Dykstra represent the IPG as a participant at the North American Summit, where he provided remarks that set the context for the Summit and moderated a session focused on cooperation among the three NAFTA countries on trade issues.

In relation to CSG-WEST, I also have some “breaking news” that I’d like to share with you, news that I think is very exciting for the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta and for the IPG. Late last week, Senator Johnson and I received a letter from Wyoming Representative Rosie Berger – who is currently the chair of CSG-WEST – in which she shared the news that approval has been secured for the establishment of a CSG-WEST – **Canada Committee**. According to her, the Canada Committee’s purpose is to strengthen ties and cooperation between the lawmakers of the 13 U.S. Western states and the Canadian provinces of BC and Alberta, which are associate members of CSG-WEST. She also indicated to us that the establishment of the Canada Committee will provide a distinct focus and forum for the exchange of information on issues of common interest, such as border crossings – something of which I am very familiar, living as I do on the border with New York – as well as water, energy and the environment, among other topics.

As well, in her letter to us, Representative Berger spoke about the Canada Committee’s role as a vehicle for strategic collaboration with key federal stakeholders in our two countries to ensure that the interests of our shared border region are promoted, and as a way to engage with legislators that are part of the Border Legislative Conference, which comprises American and Mexican legislators. I hope that you share my enthusiasm for this new development. I really do believe that the Canada Committee will provide yet another valuable opportunity for American and Canadian legislators – together and with the addition of Mexican legislators – to advance issues in which we have common cause, like a well functioning border, and to resolve disputes that may exist.

In the context of the CSG-WEST’s Canada Committee, I am reminded of the role played by the Midwestern Legislative Conference’s **Midwest-Canada Relations Committee** in discussing certain bilateral topics. This year, the Committee focused on such important issues as implementation of bilateral initiatives in the context of the Beyond the Border Action Plan, the new bridge between Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario, and the

opportunities and challenges of closer North American integration. This Committee also held a joint meeting with the Energy Committee on cross-border projects. Certainly, all of these topics are of critical interest to both of our countries as we continue to seek growth and prosperity, and the specific attention devoted to bilateral concerns in the Midwest-Canada Relations Committee is welcomed by Canada.

Of course, Canadian priorities were also evident at the Eastern Regional Conference's meeting, which was also attended by the IPG. The **Canada/U.S. Relations Committee** heard presentations on such topics as customs pre-clearance as well as the Beyond the Border and the Regulatory Cooperation Council initiatives, and other committees addressed such bilateral issues as intercity passenger rail service between the United States and Canada, and implementation of the Beyond the Border Action Plan.

August was also an active month for the Canadian Section, with IPG members attending the annual meetings held by the **New England governors** and the **governors of the United States' southern states** as well as the annual legislative summit of the **National Conference of State Legislatures**, or NCSL. At the NCSL meeting, we were fortunate to again have an opportunity to speak to legislators, as – at that meeting – another of our vice-chairs, Wayne Easter, spoke to participants as part of a panel focused on fostering international trade in today's global economy. Clearly, international trade is a key component of Canada's prosperity – Canada is a small, open economy and a trading nation – and we were grateful to have the opportunity to talk about this important topic, especially since the NCSL meeting is attended by thousands of people, including representatives of dozens of foreign countries.

The two most recent activities by the Canadian Section were the **Republican and Democratic conventions** in Tampa and Charlotte respectively. I was fortunate to be able to attend both conventions, which we view as important opportunities to meet with legislators and to hear the views of the presidential nominees about Canada – if, indeed, Canada is mentioned – and about issues that are directly relevant to Canada, such as plans to strengthen the U.S. economy. Certainly, we appreciate being able to attend these conventions, which – as you know – happen once every four years.

THE FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Recognizing that it's difficult to predict the future and that – consequently – the Canadian Section may become involved in meetings or other tasks that aren't known to us at this time, there are a number of activities that are likely to be priorities for us.

For example, at the end of November, members of the IPG are likely to attend the **national conference of the Council of State Governments**. Although we haven't yet seen a detailed agenda, I am hopeful that we will have an opportunity to speak with

representatives of CSG-WEST about how we can work with them on the activities of the newly formed Canada Committee.

In February, as is our practice, members of the Canadian Section will probably travel to Washington for the **winter meeting of the National Governors Association**, following which we are likely to take advantage of our presence in the nation's capital by **meeting with members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives**. Newly elected members may be a particular priority for us, and we will speak with them about the Inter-Parliamentary Group with a view to encouraging their active membership, including at the Group's annual meeting in the spring. Canada will be hosting that meeting. We will also speak with the newly elected members, as well as with incumbents, about issues where we share joint concerns, like implementation of the two Action Plans announced in December last year: the Beyond the Border Action Plan, which will help to improve efficiency at the shared border, among other outcomes, and the Regulatory Cooperation Council Action Plan, which – among other goals – will help to reduce business costs and increase prosperity, thereby enabling more job creation. Typically, in our meetings with our counterparts, we also discuss such issues as North American energy security, integrated supply chains in North America and around the world, and such “irritants” as Buy American provisions in U.S. legislation and fees that are applied when people or goods cross the border. From that perspective, these issues may also be a focus during our Congressional visits.

A key priority in the coming months will be efforts designed to engage members of the House of Representatives with a view to increasing interest and membership in the IPG. Unfortunately, two key, long-standing members of the U.S. Section of the Group – Illinois Representative Don Manzullo, who will be our co-chair until the end of this Congress, and Florida Representative Cliff Stearns – were not successful in their primaries. Consequently, we are anxious to identify new people to “carry the Canada-U.S. torch” in the U.S. House of Representatives. I suspect that some of you are aware of the Friends of Canada Caucus in the U.S. House, which is co-chaired by four Representatives. I hope to be able to meet with two of them as soon as possible – Representative Bill Huizenga and Representative Michael Michaud. It's possible that they will become our points of contact as we begin to focus on our spring annual meeting.

CONCLUSION

With that, you're now up to date about what we have done since the beginning of May and what we intend to do in the coming months. Our priority continues to be finding points of convergence in respective national policies, initiating dialogue – principally with our federal counterparts but also with U.S. governors and state legislators – on points of

divergence, encouraging the exchange of information with legislators and private sector representatives alike, and promoting better understanding among legislators on shared issues of concern.

As always, I thank you for your kind attention, I would welcome contact with any of you about our past or future activities, and I would be pleased to answer any questions that you might have. Thanks again.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Janis G. Johnson,
Senator, Co-Chair
Canada-United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Gord Brown, M.P.,
Co-Chair
Canada-United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	Canadian/American (Can/Am) Border Trade Alliance
DESTINATION	Washington, D.C., United States of America
DATES	September 23-25, 2012
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Gord Brown, M.P., Co-Chair
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$856.22
ACCOMMODATION	\$Ø
HOSPITALITY	\$Ø
PER DIEMS	\$73.75
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$Ø
MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES	\$595.89
TOTAL	\$1,525.86