

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**

Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

**Washington, D.C., United States of America
September 21, 2010**

Report

DELEGATION MEMBERS AND STAFF

On September 21, 2010, Mr. Gord Brown, M.P., Co-Chair of the Canadian Section of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (IPG), addressed participants at the fall meeting of the Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance (BTA) in Washington, D.C. While in Washington, Mr. Brown also spoke with Chairman Jim Oberstar, who is the House of Representatives Chair of the IPG, Chairman Collin Peterson, who chairs the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture, U.S. Representative Bill Owens, who represents a district on the U.S. side of the shared border with Canada, and the Honourable Gary Doer, who is Canada's Ambassador to the United States. Mr. Brown was accompanied by Ms. June Dewetering, the IPG's Senior Advisor.

THE EVENT

The Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance (Can/Am BTA, or BTA) holds two meetings each year: in the spring in Ottawa, Canada 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.

Attendees at the fall meeting of the BTA included private-sector representatives involved in a number of tourism, transportation and trade-related activities as well as representatives of a variety of U.S. and Canadian federal departments, among others.

DELEGATION OBJECTIVES FOR THE EVENT

The Canadian Section of the IPG has a long association with the BTA. The Co-Chairs of the Canadian Section generally address those who attend the fall meeting; at the spring meeting, the Co-Chairs usually address participants and other members of the Canadian Section also attend the meeting. 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.

In particular, Mr. Brown spoke about the Canadian Section of the IPG's activities since the BTA's 2010 spring meeting, including the 51st Annual Meeting and the summer activities involving U.S. governors and state legislators. He also highlighted some of the Canadian Section's future priorities.

At this meeting, as at other BTA meetings, Mr. Brown benefitted from his interaction with private- and public-sector organizations and individuals who deal with shared border issues on a daily basis. His attendance provided an opportunity to inform others about the range of past, current and future actions taken by the Canadian Section of the IPG in respect of shared bilateral goals as well as differences.

Mr. Brown took advantage of his time in Washington to also speak with three members of the U.S. House of Representatives – Chairman Jim Oberstar, Chairman Collin

Peterson and Representative Bill Owens – as well as with Ambassador Gary Doer and staff at Canada’s embassy in Washington.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE EVENT

As noted earlier, Mr. Brown addressed the BTA meeting, met with three members of the House of Representatives, and spoke with Ambassador Doer and staff at the Washington embassy. This report summarizes the remarks made by Mr. Brown at the BTA meeting and makes general comments about the off-the-record meetings with the members of the U.S. House of Representatives and Ambassador Doer.

REMARKS TO THE MEETING OF THE CANADIAN/AMERICAN BORDER TRADE ALLIANCE

- shortly after the BTA’s May 2010 meeting, the Canada-U.S. IPG held its 51st Annual Meeting in New Orleans; the meeting was attended by 17 Canadian Senators and members of the House of Commons, and by 7 U.S. Senators and members of the House of Representatives
- at the 51st Annual Meeting, the delegates broke into committee sessions following the opening plenary meeting:
 - Committee One focused on bilateral cooperation on North American economic security issues, including intellectual property, country-of-origin labelling, financial market issues – largely in relation to the United States – and the common border
 - Committee Two focused on bilateral cooperation on international security issues, including Afghanistan, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and Arctic issues
 - Committee Three focused on bilateral cooperation on energy and environmental issues, including the Great Lakes, particularly aquatic invasive species, North American energy security and climate change
- during Committee One’s discussion about the common border, many U.S. delegates agreed that, while border security is a priority, ways must be found to ensure that legitimate people and commerce can easily cross a secure shared border; as well, Canada's offer of a loan to Michigan of up to \$550 million to facilitate the Detroit River International Crossing received favourable mention, and delegates spoke about trusted traveller programs, border congestion, and the effects of border delays on tourism and trade
- delegates attending the 51st Annual Meeting also benefitted from two special briefings: one on the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, the other on the levee and floodwall construction efforts in New Orleans by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; this latter briefing included a tour that enabled delegates to see the work that is being done to protect New Orleans from future weather-related events

- members of the Canadian Section of the IPG look forward to ongoing discussions with U.S. counterparts, and to dialogue on those areas where their points of view are similar as well as on those areas where differences of opinion exist and dialogue could be fruitful
- after the House of Commons rose for the parliamentary summer recess, but while the Senate was still sitting, members of the Canadian Section of the IPG began their annual attendance at summer meetings of governors, state legislators and private-public sector groups; a Canadian presence at American gatherings helps to reinforce the notion that Canada is the U.S.' friend and neighbour as well as part of an integrated "North American economic space"
- members of the IPG's Canadian Section attended the annual meeting of the Western Governors Association, which routinely includes the presence of the premiers of Canada's western provinces; Ambassador Gary Doer attended the meeting and was a very welcome guest, having served as premier of Manitoba and having attended past meetings of the WGA in that capacity
- the Canadian Section of the IPG also attended the summer meeting of the National Governors Association, and delegates were able to speak with 17 governors about bilateral issues as well as the ability of our nations to share best practices and work together in attaining common goals; as well, delegates appreciated the presentations on a variety of topics that are also important for Canada, such as childhood nutrition and obesity, energy issues, interoperable communications and information sharing, the U.S.' economic recovery, and prospects for fiscal responsibility and reform
- members of the IPG's Canadian Section then attended the annual summit of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, which covered such topics as border issues, energy, transportation, water policy and the environment; of particular interest to the delegates were the sessions on the shared border as well as those on the oil sands and the steps that are being taken to mitigate the environmental impacts of oil sands production
- the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) was also an important activity for the Canadian Section of the IPG, and delegates benefitted from the presentations by policy experts as well as the ability to discuss issues with legislators from all parts of the United States – especially Michigan and North Dakota – and from around the world; delegates were particularly pleased to speak with Georgia State Senator Don Balfour, the outgoing NCSL President, and with Massachusetts State Senator Richard Moore, who will serve as President for the coming year, when they indicated that the Canadian Section of the IPG would welcome opportunities for greater participation at future NCSL meetings
- the IPG's Canadian Section then participated in the summer meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference, where a number of topics that are important for Canada were discussed, including animal welfare, rural issues, the business climate, post-secondary education admission and retention, and nuclear energy;

delegates were also able to hear a presentation by Ben Bernanke, Chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve

- members of the Canadian Section of the IPG also attended a meeting of the Midwestern Legislative Conference, where a number of legislators from Canada's provinces were also in attendance; at the meeting, members of the IPG's Canadian Section shared some of Canada's healthcare experiences, and discussed the numerous opportunities for Canada and the U.S. Midwest to collaborate on improving regional trade links, which are essential for enhancing employment opportunities on both sides of the border and for strengthening North America's presence in the changing "landscape" of the global economy
- at the meeting of the Eastern Regional Conference, which was attended by U.S. state legislators and provincial legislators from Canada's eastern provinces, IPG members from the Canadian Section were particularly pleased to discuss the benefits of improving the Canada-U.S. transportation corridors in the eastern region, believing that better regional transportation will lead to more trade, tourism and job opportunities, as well as enhanced economic competitiveness and cultural vitality in the region
- most recently, members of the IPG's Canadian Section attended the annual meeting of the Southern Governors Association (SGA) which, this year, had a great focus on the relationship between China and the U.S. Southeast; in part because of this focus, delegates spoke with governors about the importance of the Canada-U.S. relationship and met with North Carolina's Governor Bev Perdue, incoming chair of the SGA, who committed to including Canada at the meeting next year
- throughout the summer, Canadian parliamentarians who met with governors and state legislators focused on the bilateral relationship – existing positive attributes and areas where progress needs to be made, like the shared border – at every available opportunity
- at the first executive meeting of the Canadian Section of the IPG following the parliamentary summer recess, there will be a discussion about the summer activities: the key messages delivered, what worked, what did not work and what the Canadian Section's focus should be going forward
- the Canadian Section of the IPG hopes to attend the February 2011 meeting of the National Governors Association in order to continue to deliver needed messages, as well as to undertake two days of meetings with U.S. Senators and members of the House of Representatives to discuss the Canadian Section of the IPG's objectives and to lobby federal counterparts on topical issues
- the focus in Congressional meetings may include the provisions in the proposed Foreign Manufacturers Legal Accountability Act, which seems to be designed to ban imports from companies that lack an American agent; if the media and some analysts are accurate in their assessment, the objective appears to be ensuring that foreign manufacturers of defective products can be served with legal papers

- in the view of some, the problem that the proposed Foreign Manufacturers Legal Accountability Act is designed to address does not exist with respect to Canada, and passage of the legislation could have unintended consequences in relation to Canada; as was the case with the Buy American provisions in the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*, Canada could become “collateral damage”
- some believe that, without an exemption for Canada, enactment of the proposed Foreign Manufacturers Legal Accountability Act could lead to increased costs and to border delays
- regarding the shared border, a September 2010 report published by the C.D. Howe Institute, *A Matter of Trust: Expanding the Preclearance of Commerce between Canada and the United States*, is relevant; preclearance efforts between our countries have proven to be successful – including, for example, at some airports and with our trusted traveller and trusted shipper programs – and the proven success to date should be used as a starting point for further preclearance efforts
- the Canadian Section of the IPG will be sending copies of Michael Hart’s report, *A Matter of Trust: Expanding the Preclearance of Commerce between Canada and the United States*, to selected members of the U.S. Congress, and the report may be discussed with them to gauge their interest and reactions

OFF-THE-RECORD MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND AMBASSADOR GARY DOER

- New York Representative Bill Owens represents a shared-border district, and addressed the meeting of the Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance
- Chairman Collin Peterson, who has attended annual meetings of the IPG in the past, was reminded about Canada’s position on country-of-origin labelling
- Chairman Jim Oberstar discussed the successes of the IPG, noted the usefulness of the 51st and previous annual meetings as well as other interactions among members of the Canadian Parliament and the U.S. Congress, and indicated that he and his colleagues are looking forward to the 52nd Annual Meeting, which will be held in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador where, a decade ago, many American citizens spent time following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 when planes were immediately grounded
- Ambassador Doer was informed that members of the Canadian Section of the IPG are willing to speak with their Congressional counterparts about the proposed Foreign Manufacturers Legal Accountability Act, if it is determined that this approach would be beneficial

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 Border Trade Alliance Conference
DESTINATION	Washington, D.C., United States of America
DATES	September 21, 2010
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Gord Brown, M.P., Co-Chair
STAFF	Ms. June Dewetering, Senior Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	\$877.43
ACCOMMODATION	\$284.03
HOSPITALITY	\$Ø
PER DIEMS	\$276.91
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$Ø
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$Ø
TOTAL	\$1,438.37