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Legislation to Implement Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement Receives Royal Assent

International Trade Minister Peter Van Loan says Canadian producers and exporters will benefit from Canada's latest free trade agreement

(No. 208 - June 30, 2010 - 1:45 p.m. ET) The Honourable Peter Van Loan, Minister of International Trade, today announced that legislation to implement Canada's free trade agreement with Colombia has received Royal Assent.

"I'm pleased that this free trade agreement with Colombia, a key market in South America, is now law in Canada," said Minister Van Loan. "The agreement demonstrates our government's commitment to an ambitious free trade agenda. The agreement will benefit Canada's producers and exporters, reduce or eliminate tariffs on nearly all current Canadian exports, and provide a more predictable, transparent and rules-based trading environment for Canadian investors."

The Canada-Colombia free trade legislation includes parallel agreements on labour cooperation and the environment. Under these agreements, Canada and Colombia agree to respect internationally recognized labour standards and principles, and to pursue high levels of environmental protection as the two countries intensify their commercial relationship.

Here's what is being said about Canada's latest free trade agreement:

"This agreement, along with Colombia's recent move to reopen its market to Canadian cattle and beef, is yet another concrete result of this government's tireless efforts to secure opportunities in the global market for Canadian farmers," said the Honourable Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. "This important agreement will provide Canadian exporters with immediate duty-free access to the Colombian market for products ranging from wheat and barley to lentils and peas."

"The Labour Cooperation Agreement contains strong, enforceable provisions for labour rights," said the Honourable Lisa Raitt, Minister of Labour. "It is the beginning of a new relationship that will make a positive contribution to Colombia's efforts to better protect workers and enforce labour laws."

"As part of our commitment with Colombia to pursue high levels of environmental protection, we have both agreed to strive to further develop and improve our respective environmental laws and policies," said the Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of the Environment. "In addition, we have both committed to effectively enforce those laws and policies and to not weaken or relax them to encourage trade. Canada believes that trade and environmental protection can, and must, be mutually supportive."

"Engaging our neighbours in the Americas is a critical international priority for Canada under our government," said the Honourable Peter Kent, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas). "This job-creating, prosperity-generating agreement marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in Canada-Colombia relations."

"Our members are pleased with the government's commitment to move this trade agreement forward," said the Honourable Perrin Beatty, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. "This agreement is an important step forward, and we look forward to the new market opportunities it will bring."

Legislation on the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement received Royal Assent on Tuesday, June 29, 2010.

Colombia is a dynamic emerging market with a population of 48 million and an economy with high growth

potential. Colombia is a strategic destination for Canadian direct investment, especially in the mining, and oil and gas sectors. In 2009, bilateral merchandise trade with Colombia totalled nearly \$1.3 billion.

The Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement will come into force once Colombia completes its domestic process to ratify the agreement.

For more information, please visit [Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement](#).

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