



John Ossowski  
President  
Canada Border Services Agency

Paul Rochon  
Deputy Minister  
Department of Finance

March 24, 2020

Dear Mr. Ossowski and Mr. Rochon,

I am writing on behalf of the fresh fruit and vegetable industry to express our support for the request put forward by the Canadian Society of Customs Brokers (CSCB) that, in recognition of the significant financial challenges businesses are facing due to the global COVID-19 outbreak, the Government of Canada provide some flexibility in the payment deadline for March 2020 Statements of Account and for monthly payments moving forward.

As noted by the CSCB, importers and customs brokers are adapting to a new working reality that may include reducing staff, accommodating staff in self-isolation and/or implementing plans for employees to work from home; this includes those importing fresh fruits and vegetables essential to the health of Canadians.

We also understand that U.S. Customs Border Protection has indicated that it will provide some flexibility in allowing for payment extensions on a case-by-case basis. We recognize and appreciate that the Government of Canada has been working in close collaboration with its partners in the United States on a coordinated approach to ensure the free flow of goods continues throughout the COVID-19 crisis, and believe that taking a similar approach related to the payment of customs duties would help to serve this goal.

Like all sectors, the Canadian fresh produce industry is facing financially and logistically challenging weeks and months ahead. We are appreciative of the many efforts the Government of Canada is making to support Canadian citizens and businesses in navigating this crisis. Providing flexibility in the payment of duties and taxes would further our sector's ability to continue to put fresh fruits and vegetables on Canadian tables, now and following this public health crisis.

Sincere thanks in advance for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by a horizontal line.

Ron Lemaire  
President, Canadian Produce Marketing Association