



Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Jobs and Families
Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

May 15, 2025

Dear Minister Hajdu,

On behalf of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), we extend our heartfelt congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario.

CPMA is Canada's leading trade association representing companies active in the marketing and sale of fresh fruits and vegetables in Canada—from the farm gate to the dinner plate. Our membership spans the entire produce supply chain and includes major growers, shippers, packers, importers and exporters, transportation and logistics firms, brokers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, foodservice distributors, and fresh-cut processors. Founded in 1925, CPMA is proud to represent over 930 domestic and international members who are responsible for well over 90% of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada.

The fresh produce industry plays a vital role in Canada's economy, contributing nearly \$15 billion annually to GDP, supporting more than 185,400 jobs in both rural and urban communities across the country¹. Our industry is also a major trade engine for Canada, generating more than \$4.6 billion in exports and more than \$12 billion in imports in 2024 alone². Beyond its economic impact, the fresh fruit and vegetable sector also plays a crucial role in enhancing the health and well-being of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Despite these successes, growing political uncertainty with our largest trading partner, a series of port disruptions, escalating severe weather events and continuing consumer concerns about the cost of food have all contributed to significant challenges for the Canadian fresh produce sector. More federal support is needed to make food a federal priority and to create the conditions necessary to enable an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable fresh produce industry in Canada, while ensuring our competitiveness in the global marketplace.

CPMA urges the government to support a strengthened food system and food security for all Canadians by adopting a whole-of-government approach to agriculture and food production, and by prioritizing food production and access to food in legislation, policy and crisis management. CPMA recommends the establishment of an Agri-food Supply Chain Advisory Council to serve as a standing forum to support Cabinet in advancing this cross-departmental effort.

¹ Conference Board of Canada, 2023


² Statistics Canada, 2025

Under this lens, as you begin your role as Minister of Jobs and Families, CPMA offers the following recommendations for government action to support Canada's fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain, which were also shared in a [letter to Prime Minister Carney](#) following the federal election:

- The government should invest in the health of Canadians using a "Food as Medicine" approach to support measures to reduce diet-related diseases and hunger and mitigate health care costs associated with food insecurity and poor nutrition.
- The government should advance measures promoting the Canada Food Guide recommendation to fill *Half Your Plate* with fruits and vegetables, including in public procurement and government programming.
- The government should prioritize the development and implementation of the National School Food Program, ensuring that enhancing nutrition and promoting healthy eating practices, including through the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, are core objectives of the program.
- The government should implement measures to prioritize the movement of food and essential goods through ports of entry in the event of emergency events or disruptions, and work to address the root causes of labour disruptions impacting critical supply chain infrastructure.
- The government should implement a National Workforce Strategy to meet immediate labor needs and generate future interest in careers across the food supply chain through education, training and skills development.
- The government should maintain a stable agricultural workforce by preserving the distinction between the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) and other streams within the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program, such as AgStream and the Low-Wage stream, and by establishing a permanent Recognized Employer Program under the TFWP.

We thank you in advance for your consideration of the recommendations outlined above. CPMA and our members are eager to serve as a resource for you and your team, and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the priorities and needs of the Canadian fresh produce sector.

Sincere regards and congratulations again on your appointment,



Ron Lemaire
President
Canadian Produce Marketing Association

Cc:

Honourable Anna Gainey, Secretary of State for Children and Youth
Honourable John Zerucelli, Secretary of State for Labour