



MP Peter Schiefke
Chair, Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

March 18, 2026

Dear Mr. Chair and Committee Members,

On behalf of Canada's fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain, we are pleased to share our comments to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities study on supporting, diversifying and modernizing Quebec and Canada's ports.

Based in Ottawa, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) is in a unique position as an organization representing companies from the farm gate to the dinner plate, spanning the entire produce industry. The Association's members include major growers, shippers, packers and marketers; importers and exporters; transportation and logistics firms; brokers, distributors and wholesalers; retailers and foodservice distributors; and fresh cut operators and processors. In fact, CPMA's almost 900 domestic and international members are responsible for 90% of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada.

The fresh produce supply chain is a significant contributor to Canada's economy, generating \$18.6 billion in GDP and supporting more than 188,000 jobs in rural and urban communities from coast to coast¹. We are also proud to play critical role in supporting the health and well-being of Canadians in ensuring a stable, affordable supply of nutritious food.

Context: The role of ports in Canada's fresh produce supply chain

Canadians rely on a wide range of produce grown both domestically and internationally to meet year-round demand and reflect the diverse food preferences of communities across the country. Marine ports are a primary point of entry for imported goods and play a critical role in ensuring that fresh produce can move quickly and efficiently into Canada and onward through domestic distribution networks.

It is also important to recognize that the high volume and perishability of fruits and vegetables means that longer dwell times at ports can not only delay delivery and increase costs for industry, but can also result in lost sales, product spoilage, and ultimately food waste. Ensuring the smooth flow of essential products through Canada's marine ports is therefore critical to supporting both economic competitiveness and food security across the country. The supply chain linkages of transportation, border access, and ports of entry and exit are key to achieving this goal.

¹ Signal49 Research (formerly Conference Board of Canada), 2025

Recommendations

Federal investment in trade and transportation infrastructure, alongside measures that support efficient border operations and resilient supply chains, will help ensure that Canada's port system continues to support the reliable movement of fresh food and other essential goods for Canadians. CPMA was pleased to see Federal Budget 2025 include significant investments in critical trade infrastructure. Building on this momentum, we offer the following recommendations for government action to support and modernize Canada's ports and strengthen national supply chains:

1. Make agriculture and food security a national priority in the development and implementation of the government's broader Build Canada economic strategy, including at Canada's ports, and ensure that port infrastructure needs are considered in the National Food Security Strategy.
2. Deliver sustained and strategic capital investment, including through the Major Projects Office, the Trade Diversification Corridors Fund and other mechanisms, prioritizing transportation and trade infrastructure improvements, including the enhancement of cold chain infrastructure.
3. Establish priority lanes at ports of entry and implement a dedicated Trusted Trader pilot program to further streamline the movement of essential and perishable products across the Canadian border.
4. Ensure that departments with border clearance responsibility, such as CBSA and CFIA, are sufficiently resourced to grow inspection capacity in conjunction with the expansion of port capacity to avoid creating supply chain bottlenecks.
5. Coordinate efforts across relevant government departments to work proactively with port authorities and other stakeholders to put in place a formalized process to allow the movement of food and essential goods through Canada's ports of entry in the event of emergency events or disruptions.
6. Work to address the root causes of labour disruptions impacting critical supply chain infrastructure, including Canada's ports.
7. Invest in modern, non-intrusive inspection and scanning equipment at ports of entry to accelerate CBSA inspections of highly perishable foods, reducing reliance on physical examinations, minimizing dwell times, and preventing avoidable product spoilage, food waste, and cost escalation when CBSA inspections are required.

The fresh produce supply chain is one of the most highly globally integrated and dynamic supply chains in the world, and Canada's ports play a critical role in facilitating our success and strengthening food security across the country. CPMA thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide comments on this important study and would be pleased to appear before the Committee or to answer any questions members may have.

Sincerely,



Ron Lemaire
President
Canadian Produce Marketing Association