

Premier Gordon Campbell
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One of our most important economic advantages and assets in Canada is our relationship with the United States. The free and open flow of goods and products and people back and forth, the building of relationships – both social and economic – are critical advantages for us in both countries, and that provides exceptional opportunities for us.

Canada's major trading partner is, obviously, the United States. It accounts for about 87 per cent of our trade. But sometimes in the United States it's forgotten that one of America's biggest trading partners is Canada: about 25 per cent of your goods are traded to the north.

So I'd like you to know that Ralph Klein and I are free, open traders. We believe in an open marketplace. We believe in free enterprise.

There are lots of things that you should know about both of our provinces. First, the combined population of British Columbia and Alberta is about 25 per cent of Canada's population. We actually contribute about a third of Canada's gross domestic product. And I believe we are the future of economic development in our country.

Sometimes, it's easy to look to Canada and look straight by us and talk about Ontario and Quebec, the great central provinces that we have in our country.

But Alberta is far more than oil and gas. British Columbia is far more than forestry and fisheries. We actually are building strong and vital economies that touch on all sectors of economic activity. Our technology industries are booming in British Columbia and Alberta: 21 of the 50 fastest growing technology companies in the country are in British Columbia and in Alberta. We have a very strong and vibrant biotechnology sector in British Columbia. In fact, it's the fastest growing biotechnology sector in Canada

One of the things that we want to do is build relationships with people that share our objectives in ways that are mutually beneficial. I think that oil and gas is a perfect example of a mutually beneficial relationship that can naturally go even further.

About 71 per cent of Canada's oil and gas industry comes from British Columbia and Alberta. Alberta is by far the largest contributor, but British Columbia is growing.

We are strengthening our oil and gas industry. We have a number of your companies from here that we're meeting with. Burlington, Apache, Anadarko - they're all there working very hard on exploration and development, in our province.

We're looking at harmonizing our regulatory codes between Alberta and British Columbia so that when you come to Canada we can reduce your overall costs and you'll see significant additional benefits. Those things are important.

But there's another thing that I think is even more important to the United States: there is a significant challenge that America faces in terms of its energy and its long-term energy sustainability. And there's an energy powerhouse in British Columbia and Alberta that's there and ready to meet your needs.

I think that it's very important that in the United States people ask themselves this simple question: Who would you rather depend on for your energy security – Saudi Arabia or Canada?

Now, you get to make that choice, but you should understand that the choice is there. It's not always about going to Saudi Arabia; it's not always about looking to try to figure out about what's happening there. You have a country, you have a culture, you have a partner right next door that's able and willing to help you meet your energy needs.

In British Columbia we have significant oil and gas reserves. We have offshore oil and gas that we are now moving towards exploring, which represents literally billions of barrels of oil and trillions of cubic feet of natural gas.

We have about 115 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in reserve in our province. It's ready to be accessed. It's ready to be developed. We've changed our regulatory codes and our royalty regimes to encourage exploration of that resource.

We have 90 trillion cubic feet of coalbed methane, and we're going to be working with Alberta to make sure that those massive reserves are also available to the marketplace in the United States.

All of those things are important initiatives that present opportunities for communities and industries in the United States - just as they do for our communities and industries in British Columbia and Alberta.

There are some things that I'd like you to know about B.C. It is Canada's westernmost province and Canada's gateway to the Asia Pacific. I've heard Premier Klein likes to call us Alberta's waterfront.

British Columbia is actually larger than Texas. It's about a third larger in terms of our geographic area, than the state of Texas. While we're bigger in size, our population is about one fifth of your population.

We're the single largest exporter of softwood lumber in the world. We export about \$450 million dollars of forestry products every second. Right now we are suffering a little bit from some of the protectionist actions that have been taken here in the United States. In terms of what I've heard described as a jobless recovery here in the U.S., it's a perfect

example of short-term protectionism actually hurting long-term job creation and economic activity. For example, the disruptions that have been caused by softwood duties lead not just to fewer Americans being able to afford homes; they lead to fewer Americans actually building homes.

Seventy per cent of our exports go to the United States, compared with about 85 per cent from Canada as a whole. That's because our balance tends to go to the Asia Pacific.

We have very strong ties into the China marketplace, very strong ties into the Indian subcontinent and into the Japanese marketplace as well. They are significant trading partners.

We're also a growing technology leader. For example, we are the global leader in fuel cell development. About 87 per cent of all Canadian fuel cell research and development activity takes place in B.C. We also have four of the five fastest-growing Canadian technology companies, in our province. We're investing significantly in our technology industries, including doubling the number of technology graduates in our province.

We have a good health care system. We have an excellent public education system. All of those things are important parts of building a long-term and sustainable community where people want to live and they want to create the kind of future that they can build on.

But we are a small and open economy. We are an economy that depends on trade. We are an economy that depends on partnership. We're an economy that depends not just on our natural resources but also on the minds and the creativity of the people who live in British Columbia.

We are very excited about a number of opportunities. None more than our opportunity to host the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. It's a chance for us shine, a chance for us to show off what we have to offer. It's a chance for us to offer you in Texas a special place in the 2010 Winter Olympics as spectators and as participants.

We know that there'll be many Texans that come and visit - whether you're visiting us to fly fish, whether you're visiting us to ski, whether you're visiting us just to enjoy the natural surroundings that we offer in British Columbia.

We would like you to think of us as a place to do business, as a place to have a good time, and as a place to experience a future that's full of opportunity.

Working with Alberta, we believe we can enhance that. Yes, there are times when we're in competition, but there are also times when what we do together, reinforces the strength of both provinces.

I think we can take that lesson and apply it, as well, to the people of Texas and the people of western United States.

We are your partners; we are your friends. You are our customers, and we want to do what we can to meet your needs.

I am very proud to be the Premier of British Columbia, and I think that the relationships that we have with our American friends are truly relationships to be cherished.