

The comprehensive & progressive agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

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The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) was signed in March by all 11 member countries, including Canada. The agreement is the culmination of years of work done by the previous Conservative government. It is a historical agreement that will increase Canada's GDP and has the opportunity to deliver many economic benefits to our country.

However, there are lingering concerns which need to be closely monitored to ensure all of Canada's sectors and ultimately, all Canadians reap the benefits of the CPTPP.

We, the Conservative Official Opposition, are the party of free trade. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is the legacy of the previous Conservative government. It later became the CPTPP after the United States of America (U.S.A.) pulled out of the TPP from the original 12-nation agreement in early 2017. The eleven remaining nations (Canada, Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam) agreed to a revised version, which became the CPTPP with the final text of the agreement being released on February 20, 2018.

The agreement was signed on March 08, 2018 by the Honourable Francois-Philippe Champagne, Minister of International Trade, in Chile with all 11 member countries.

The CPTPP is practically identical to what the previous Conservative government had negotiated. The main difference between the new and old agreements is 22 provisions which have been suspended. There is a new preamble, a series of side letters, as well as a new framework for implementation, which is that the CPTPP comes into force 60 days after the sixth signatory country ratifies it with no attached GDP requirement. There is also a framework in place to allow countries, like the U.S.A., to join the agreement later, should they choose to become a member country.

Canada's GDP will increase by an estimated \$3.4 billion through the CPTPP, compared to \$2.8 billion under TPP, due to the absence of the U.S.A. The significance of this deal cannot be understated - it represents 495 million people and a combined GDP of \$13.5 trillion (source: Global Affairs Canada). When put together with NAFTA and the free trade agreements with the European Union (CETA) and South Korea, the CPTPP will make Canada the only G7 nation with free trade access to the Americas, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific region. It would also provide Canada with access to Japan and other burgeoning markets.

It's important to note that the environmental and labour chapters of the CPTPP which the current Liberal government claimed as a result of their 'progressive trade agenda' were actually negotiated by the previous Conservative government prior to 2016 and have not changed. There are still concerns surrounding supply managed agriculture and motor vehicles, but farmers can count on the Conservative Official Opposition to stand up for them and we will carefully examine the implementation of the CPTPP and ensure it doesn't negatively impact Canadians. There is also concern that if the current Liberal government takes too long to ratify the CPTPP, Canadian firms and agricultural producers will lose their first-movers advantage in the market.

Canadian producers, workers, farmers, entrepreneurs, and businesses have been able to count on the Conservative Official Opposition to stand up for their interests and they can continue to do so as the CPTPP slowly inches forward. It's now been two months since Minister Champagne signed the agreement. The clock is ticking for the ratification of the agreement to allow Canadians and Canadian producers to enjoy the economic benefits of this historic deal.