

Keeping Goods Moving:

Protecting Ontario's Supply Chains Critical to COVID-19 Response



AIR CARGO AND SUPPLY CHAIN ESSENTIAL FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Every day, cargo being shipped in aircrafts include critical goods that Ontarians rely on such as pharmaceuticals, personal protective equipment (PPE), information technology components, and high-value foodstuffs. It has never been clearer how important the movement of essential goods within Ontario's supply chain (and the businesses within it) are to the health and prosperity of this province.

On April 6, 2020, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) and Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA) convened leaders from the air cargo supply chain and business community for a virtual roundtable with the Honourable Victor Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade to discuss the importance of air cargo and supply chains to the COVID-19 response.



Topics of discussion during the roundtable included:

- The importance of goods movement to the Canadian economy
- Changes that could help support goods movement during this unprecedented time
- The role that the sector will play in longer term economic recovery

Insights from the discussion will shape stakeholder response during the critical weeks and months ahead and help ensure the continued movement of critical cargo operations throughout Canada.

INDUSTRY RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES OF THESE UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, partners in Ontario's air cargo and supply chain took decisive action to keep goods moving, ensuring the essential flow of supplies and goods in Canada. The industry immediately responded to capacity issues resulting from an increase in e-commerce demand and reduced passenger flight activity. This resulted in shifting operations from passenger travel to support cargo needs, while maintaining repatriation efforts to bring Canadians home. Due to the hard work and dedication of Ontario's supply chain, all cargo operations have been maintained and continue to expand during this crisis.

On the ground demand has never been higher. Operations are being altered to prioritize the packing and shipping of essential items such as food, medicine, toilet paper, diapers, etc. Technology is also being used where possible to support more efficient and swift movement of goods.

Worker safety continues to be paramount for this industry, as it does within the overall business community. Supply chain partners have moved swiftly to adapt their operations to health guidelines to accommodate physical distancing regulations, supply personal protective equipment to front-line workers,

ensure the cleanliness of facilities and equipment, and improve access to facilities for truckers and last-mile delivery operators.

Furthermore, capacity will be essential to support immediate needs and for the path to economic recovery. Industry is eager to work with government to build further capacity to keep goods moving across the province. This includes lifting noise bylaws across the corridor to keep cargo moving at night as well as ensuring every part of Ontario's supply chain is protected and deemed essential.

SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGES

Ontario's supply chain is extremely complex. Partners within it continue to face challenges from facilitating cross border movements of pilots, crews, and truck drivers to improving access to facilities for truckers and last-mile delivery operators.



Key issues identified by supply chain stakeholders during the roundtable included:

- The need for personal protective equipment for workers, specifically front-line employees
- Cross border movements of pilots, crews, and truck drivers
- Access to facilities for truckers; long haul and last mile
- Capacity to store goods imported by now shuttered or closed businesses
- Construction to support current and continued capacity

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND THOSE THAT ARISE AS WE NAVIGATE THESE UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

To that end, we call on all levels of government to work closely with partners in the supply chain and their local chambers of commerce to solve these very real challenges that could hinder Ontario's vital supply chain. In particular, we look to:

- Continued efforts at all levels of government to coordinate actions so that there is clarity and consistency across the country;
- Continued support for the workers by all levels of government, including ensuring that enough PPE is available and improved access to facilities (food & beverage, restrooms) for truckdrivers, both on long haul routes and for local 'last-mile' deliveries;
- Continued adjustments to local regulations, such as the suspension of municipal noise by-laws restricting overnight deliveries in Toronto, expediting building permit approvals for capacity expansions and the resumption of supply chain construction projects, to ensure the continued flow of goods;
- The federal government and national leaders to continue to work with international counterparts to facilitate the cross-border movements of pilots/crews/truck drivers in a safe and expeditious manner; and,
- Continued work by the federal government and its agencies to expedite processes and approvals, such as for Canada Customs clearance and introduction of aircraft into air cargo service that facilitate the movement of goods by air.

CONCLUSION

The air cargo supply chain has proven incredibly important to support Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses from coast to coast continue to step up, join the fight, and divert resources to combat this crisis. Supply chain partners—from airlines to freight forwarders to customs—and government continue to work around the clock to keep critical supplies and essential goods moving. Collaboration between industry and government has never been more vital and will be increasingly important as governments look to build the roadmap to recovery.