

Interprovincial Trade Barriers

Member Factsheet

Background

Interprovincial trade is a major engine for growth in Canada—it drives sales, opens up new markets, and supports jobs. But for many businesses, outdated trade barriers between provinces still get in the way, limiting opportunities and costing the economy billions every year.

According to [the International Monetary Fund](#), Canada's internal barriers equate to a "tariff" of approximately 6.9%. Removing them could increase GDP by 4%.

These barriers come from a patchwork of different provincial rules, licenses, and industry standards that create a lot of unnecessary friction. Businesses looking to grow across provinces often run into duplicate certifications, hurdles moving goods, and restrictions that make it harder to hire or move workers where needed.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce estimates that eliminating interprovincial trade barriers could add up to \$100 billion to Canada's economy, or \$7,500 per household annually, as well as cut the gap in productivity between Canada and the U.S. by a third.

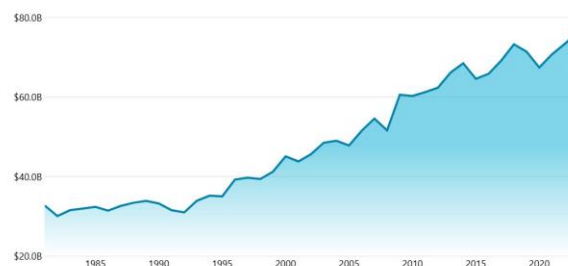
State of Interprovincial Trade

Alberta punches well above its weight when it comes to interprovincial exports. Alberta is third nationally for gross interprovincial

exports at \$76.1B, behind Quebec and Ontario.

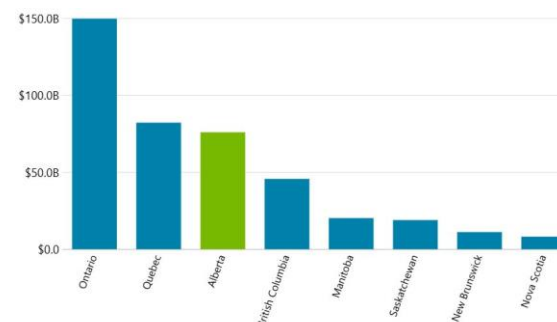
Alberta is the highest interprovincial exporter on a per-capita basis. According to the [federal government](#), almost 20% of Canada's GDP is from goods and services moving across provincial or territorial borders, totaling over \$530B in 2023.

Graph 1: Alberta's Interprovincial Exports



Source: Alberta Economic Dashboard

Graph 2: Interprovincial Exports by Province



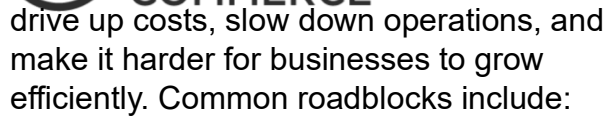
Source: Alberta Economic Dashboard

In 2023, key statistics for interprovincial trade in Alberta include:

- \$76B total exports to other provinces
 - \$40.72B in exported goods
 - \$36.25B in exported services
- \$73B total imports from other provinces
 - \$24.53B in imported goods
 - \$48.8B in imported services

Barriers to Interprovincial Trade

Interprovincial trade barriers still get in the way of the free movement of goods, services, and labour across Canada. They



- ## Feedback from Local Businesses

Edmonton is home to over **35,000 businesses**. 95% of which are small businesses with less than 99 employees.

A February 2025 Edmonton Chamber of Commerce survey revealed the following about local businesses:

- 80% are concerned about interprovincial trade barriers
- 70% think removing interprovincial barriers is important to their business
- 73% say interprovincial trade barriers have an impact on their business
- 83% conduct business outside the city

- BC, SK, ON, and NT were the most common provinces to do business with
- Occupational licensing was the top trade barrier currently impacting members

Canada

| Province/Territory | Purchases from suppliers in another province or territory (%) | Sales to customers located in another province or territory (%) |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 58 | 19 |
| Prince Edward Island | 65 | 30 |
| Nova Scotia | 55 | 30 |
| New Brunswick | 52 | 22 |
| Quebec | 35 | 25 |
| Ontario | 35 | 28 |
| Manitoba | 50 | 30 |
| Saskatchewan | 57 | 29 |
| Alberta | 52 | 33 |
| British Columbia | 49 | 29 |
| Yukon | 68 | 30 |
| Northwest Territories | 66 | 25 |
| Nunavut | 77 | 14 |

% of businesses

■ Purchases from suppliers in another province or territory
■ Sales to customers located in another province or territory

Source: StatsCan Canadian Survey on Interprovincial Trade

Recommendations

The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce recommends that all orders of government prioritize eliminating all remaining interprovincial trade barriers.

As a starting point, this should include:

- Adopt a mutual recognition agreement across all provinces
- Address ongoing barriers in alcohol and food trade
- Harmonize business regulations for small businesses