

2026 FALL MEMBER FORUM**Gateway to Growth: Trade, Infrastructure and Canada's New Economy****November 18 & 19, 2026****Morris J Wosk Centre for Dialogue and Delta Vancouver Suites**

Canada stands at a pivotal moment. Global competition, shifting trade patterns, North American uncertainty and renewed pressure to build major infrastructure are testing Canada's economic ambition. For Western Canada, the opportunity is significant: to strengthen trade corridors, expand access to global markets, improve system performance and turn national priorities into projects that can be delivered.

The 2026 Fall Forum will examine the choices that will shape Canada's next phase of growth. Discussions will explore the economic outlook, the future of CUSMA, Pacific Gateway capacity, major project delivery, and the system constraints limiting transportation performance.

Against a backdrop of increasing global competition and pressure to improve productivity, the Forum will focus on how Canada can move from ambition to execution by accelerating projects, strengthening trade corridors, attracting investment, building durable partnerships and improving the reliability, capacity and resilience of the transportation system.

[Register Now](#)

7:30 am **Hot Buffet Breakfast**

8:15 am **Welcoming Remarks & Introductions**

- Hon. Kim Gartner, Minister of Highways, Government of Saskatchewan and Chair, WESTAC *(invited)*
- Lindsay Kislock, President & CEO, WESTAC

8:30 am **Canada's Economic Outlook: Competitiveness, Trade and Growth**

As Canada navigates a more complex global economic landscape, understanding the forces shaping growth, investment and trade has never been more important. This session will provide insight into the Canadian and North American economic outlook, with a focus on competitiveness, productivity, trade diversification, labour markets, infrastructure investment and the conditions needed to support long-term growth.

- Douglas Porter, Chief Economist & Managing Director Economics, BMO Economics

9:15 am **Bright Future: Expanding Canada's Northern Trade Gateway**

Prince Rupert is one of the country's fastest-growing trade gateways, with major new investments creating capacity to move more Canadian goods to global markets. As Canada looks to dramatically expand and diversify its trade, the northern gateway has an increasingly important role to play. Kurt Slocombe, President & CEO of the Prince Rupert Port Authority, will discuss the port's growth plans, priority infrastructure investments and opportunities to strengthen supply chains and support Canada's long-term economic competitiveness.

- Introduction by Janet Drysdale, EVP & Chief Commercial Officer, CN
- Kurt Slocombe, President & CEO, Prince Rupert Port Authority

10:00 am **Break**

10:30 am

CUSMA: What's Next?

With the United States declining to renew the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) in its current form, decisions made over the coming months will shape the future of North American trade, investment and supply chains. Former Ambassador Hillman will share her perspective on the road ahead. She will be joined by Carlo Dade for a discussion on the key issues under review, Canada's priorities and challenges, and the implications for transportation, trade and economic competitiveness in an increasingly uncertain global environment.

Speakers:

- **Kirsten Hillman**, Former Ambassador to United States
- **Carlo Dade**, Director, International Policy and the New North America Initiative, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary
- Additional speaker to be determined

12:00 pm

Buffet Lunch

1:00 pm

Building Canada's Future: From Ambition to Action

This conversation will bring together senior federal leaders responsible for advancing the major projects, transportation infrastructure and labour stability needed to support Canada's economic growth and trade ambitions.

Dawn Farrell, CEO of the Major Projects Office, will provide an update on the Office's progress, priorities and efforts to accelerate major projects, streamline approvals and attract investment. Michael Vandergrift will discuss the government's transportation infrastructure priorities, including implementation of the Trade Diversification Corridors Fund and investments to strengthen the capacity, resilience and performance of Canada's trade corridors. Rob Wright will provide an update on measures intended to improve labour stability and support the reliable operation of Canada's federally regulated transportation system.

Together, the speakers will explore how coordinated action on project delivery, trade infrastructure and labour policy can strengthen Canada's competitiveness, support export diversification and turn national ambitions into results.

- **Dawn Farrell**, CEO, Major Projects Office *(invited)*
- **Michael Vandergrift**, Deputy Minister, Transport Canada
- **Rob Wright**, Deputy Minister of Labour and Associate Deputy Minister of Employment and Social Development, Employment and Social Development Canada

2:30 pm

Break

3:00 pm

Driving Diversification at Canada's Largest Port

As Canada's largest port, the Port of Vancouver will continue to play a central role in the country's trade growth and diversification. Peter Xotta, President and CEO of the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, will outline the Government of Canada's Port of Vancouver Gateway Strategy, including the priority projects, infrastructure investments and opportunities to expand capacity, improve reliability and strengthen connections to global markets.

- **Peter Xotta**, President & CEO, Vancouver Fraser Port Authority

3:30 pm

Optimizing Complex Transportation Systems

This session will explore how Canada can unlock productivity by identifying and removing the constraints that limit transportation system performance. Drawing on the Theory of Constraints and systems thinking, Dr. Barnard will demonstrate why improving flow, rather than optimizing every individual part of the system, is key to increasing capacity, reliability and resilience.

- **Dr. Alan Barnard**, Entrepreneur, Research Scientist and Author

5:00 pm

Reception

THURSDAY

November 19, 2026

7:45 am **Breakfast** *(open to all attendees)*

8:30 am **WESTAC LEADER'S COUNCIL**

Each forum concludes with an in camera, frank discussion among the most senior representatives of member organizations. Participation is limited to one representative from each member organization and excludes non-members.

The Fall Leaders' Council will be focused on the following question, with discussion supported by Dr. Alan Barnard.

If Canada is serious about doubling overseas trade and improving productivity, what is the one system constraint we should collectively focus on removing first?

Agenda

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| 8:30 am | Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Lindsay Kislock, President & CEO, WESTAC▪ Dr. Alan Barnard |
| 8:35 am | Discussion |
| 11:00 am | Meeting concludes |

11:15 am **Board of Directors meeting**

11:30 am **Buffet Lunch** *(open to all attendees)*

12:00 pm **Board meeting adjourns**

12:30 pm **Tours Depart** *(see next page)*

Optional Tours: Explore Transportation in Vancouver

Attendees will have the opportunity to explore key elements of Vancouver's marine transportation system. **Tours will depart from the Wosk Centre at 12:30 pm. Buses will be provided for the DP World and Seaspan tours; participants will walk to the BC Coast Pilots simulator.**

When registering for the Forum, indicate your interest in one of the three options:

Option 1: DP World Centerm (Return by 2:30)

Tour DP World's Centerm terminal to see how one of Canada's busiest container gateways connects ships, rail and trucks to move international trade efficiently across North America. Participants will gain insight into modern terminal operations, intermodal logistics, and the infrastructure and technology investments that are increasing capacity, productivity and supply chain reliability.

Option 2: Pilotage Simulator (up to 2 hours)

The Pilotage Simulator for Training and Research (PSTAR) is one of the most advanced marine simulation facilities in North America, jointly operated by the Pacific Pilotage Authority (PPA) and the BC Coast Pilots. Experience how advanced simulation technology is used to safely test new shipping operations, train marine pilots and evaluate infrastructure before it is built. This behind-the-scenes tour will demonstrate how digital twins and simulation support safer navigation, improve decision-making and optimize the flow of marine traffic through Canada's busiest port.

Option 3: Seaspan Shipyard Tour (Return by 3 pm; traffic dependent)

Tour Seaspan Shipyards for a behind-the-scenes look at one of Canada's most advanced shipbuilding facilities. Participants will explore how innovation, skilled trades and advanced manufacturing are supporting Canada's National Shipbuilding Strategy and strengthening the country's industrial capacity and marine sector. **Requirements: Safety Boots & ID**