

# 2026 SPRING MEMBER FORUM

## TRADE DIVERSIFICATION AS A COMPETITIVENESS TEST

APRIL 16 & 17, 2026

HOTEL SASKATCHEWAN, REGINA

Canada talks about trade diversification. Delivering it is another matter.

We are already a global exporting success story, with deep trade ties and firms that compete effectively in international markets. Our economic strength will continue to be anchored in the United States, which will remain Canada's primary trading partner. In that context, this year's CUSMA review is critical—not only to safeguard market access, but to provide the certainty Canadian exporters need to invest, scale, and compete. At the same time, maintaining the status quo will not deliver the next phase of export growth.

If Canada is serious about doubling non-U.S. exports, trade diversification must be treated as a core competitiveness agenda, not a secondary geopolitical objective. That requires sharper execution and harder choices: focusing on markets where Canadian firms can genuinely win, aligning infrastructure and programs with commercial realities, and ensuring our trade and innovation systems are built to support scale. Global demand exists; the challenge is whether Canada is prepared to compete for it with discipline and intent.

The WESTAC Spring Member Forum is designed to be a grounded, forward-looking conversation that connects global strategy to on-the-ground realities for exporters. The Forum will challenge participants to think differently about trade diversification: not as a hedge against the U.S. market, but as a deliberate, long-term competitiveness agenda that enables Canadian businesses to win globally.



## VENUE

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### Hotel Saskatchewan

2125 Victora Ave.  
Regina, SK

Tel: (306) 522-7691

### Meeting Rooms

All meetings and meals take place on the mezzanine level unless otherwise noted.

## SCHEDULE

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### Thursday, April 16, 2026

7:30 am	Hot Buffet Breakfast	Blue Lounge
8:30 am	Annual General Meeting	Regency Ballroom
8:45 am	Welcoming Remarks	Regency Ballroom
9:00 am	Working Sessions begin	
10:30 am	Break	
11:00 am	Working Sessions (cont.)	
11:45 am	Lunch	Blue Lounge
1:00 pm	Working Sessions (cont.)	Regency Ballroom
2:30 pm	Break	
3:00 pm	Working Sessions (cont.)	
4:30 pm	Sessions end	
4:30 pm	Reception	Blue Lounge

### Friday, April 17, 2026

7:45 am	Buffet Breakfast	Blue Lounge
8:30 am	Leaders Council <sup>1</sup>	Regency Ballroom
10:30 am	Break	
10:45 am	Board of Directors Meeting	Saskatchewan Suite
11:30 am	Lunch	Blue Lounge
12:30 pm	Tour: Global Transportation Hub + CPKC Intermodal Yard*	
3:30 pm	Arrive back at Hotel Saskatchewan	

<sup>1</sup> Each member organization may have **one**\* representative at the Leaders Council. The representative should be a senior executive and a regular attendee at WESTAC.

\* Two representatives per sustaining member organization.

\*Tour participation is limited to delegates who registered in advance. Pick up and drop off will be outside the Hotel Saskatchewan. Please meet in the lobby.

# 2026 SPRING MEMBER FORUM

## Trade Diversification as a Competitiveness Test

Thursday, April 16, 2026

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7:30 am **Hot Buffet Breakfast**

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8:30 am **Annual General Meeting**

**Hon. Kim Gartner**, Minister of Highways, Government of Saskatchewan,  
and Chair, WESTAC

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8:45 am **Welcoming Remarks and Introductions**

**Hon. Kim Gartner**, Minister of Highways, Government of Saskatchewan,  
and Chair, WESTAC

**Lindsay Kislock**, President and CEO, WESTAC

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9:00 am **Breaking Point: The New Big Shifts Putting Canada at Risk**

We are in the midst of the greatest political crisis Canada has ever faced. The country stands at risk. Even before Donald Trump returned to the U.S. presidency, brandishing tariffs and threats of annexation, Canada had started to crack. Year after year of decisions deferred, problems ignored, and cans kicked carelessly down the road have created dangerous fissures.

Stifling regulations drag down the economy. Regional tensions threaten unity in both Quebec and the Prairies. The immigration system is broken. And Canada stands alone, having failed to pay the cost of defending itself.

Renowned author, political analyst, and demographic trend predictor, Darrell Bricker, will return to WESTAC with his crystal ball to reflect on his newest book and share his thoughts on the big fix for Canada.

**Darrell Bricker**, Chief Executive Officer, Ipsos Public Affairs

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10:30 am **Break**

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11:00 am **Trade Diversification, CUSMA & Canada's Global Standing**

Canada's Chief Trade Commissioner will provide an update on the global trade outlook and its implications for Canadian businesses. The session will explore Canada's objective to double non-U.S. exports and where the most significant near-term market opportunities may exist. Participants will hear insights into how Canada is currently perceived in priority international markets, including what global customers are saying about our competitiveness and supply chain performance.

The discussion will also address key issues ahead of the upcoming CUSMA review and what Canadian businesses should be focused on in the months ahead.

**Sara Wilshaw**, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, International Trade and  
Chief Trade Commissioner, Global Affairs Canada

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# 2026 SPRING MEMBER FORUM

## Trade Diversification as a Competitiveness Test

Thursday, April 16, 2026

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11:45 am **Lunch**

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1:00 pm **Global Customers Buy Performance**

Doubling non-U.S. exports is a competitiveness challenge—dependent on expanding port and rail capacity, improving reliability and resilience, and modernizing supply chain operations. Export diversification requires trade corridors that global customers can trust.

Speakers:

**Janet Drysdale**, Executive Vice-President & Chief Commercial Officer, CN

**Doug Smith**, Chief Executive Officer, DP World (Canada)

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

**Paul Boucher**, President, Teamsters Canada Rail Conference

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2:30 pm **Break**

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3:00 pm **Changing Our Fate & Reaching the Goal**

Doubling Canada's non-U.S. exports will require a step-change in Western Canada's export capacity—through trade-enabling infrastructure, financing and risk tools, market intelligence, and coordinated government–industry action. This panel explores how Western Canadian exporters can scale into priority global markets and overcome barriers to diversification.

Moderator:

**Jeff Nankivell**, President & CEO, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

Speakers:

**Richard Wong**, VP Regulatory & Operations, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers

**Stephen Paul**, Chief Strategy Officer, Ray-Mont Logistics

**Sam Farris**, President, K+S Potash Canada

**Michael O'Shaughnessy**, VP, Marketing and Logistics, Coal, EVR Operations Ltd.

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4:30 pm **Closing Remarks**

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4:30 pm **Reception**

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6:30 pm **Reception ends**

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# 2026 SPRING MEMBER FORUM

## Trade Diversification as a Competitiveness Test

Friday, April 17, 2026

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7:45 am **Buffet Breakfast** (all guests welcome)

8:30 am

### WESTAC LEADERS' COUNCIL

The Leaders' Council session will begin with Transport Canada presenting updated commodity forecasts for Western Canada and how trade flows could evolve as Canada works toward the federal objective of doubling non-U.S. exports by 2035. Officials will introduce their scenario-based analytical framework and outline how different economic and policy conditions could shape future export patterns and transportation demand. The discussion will also touch on the federal strategy to support trade diversification, including the recently announced Trade Diversification Corridors Fund, as well as a brief update on work related to paperless trade.

The session will then turn to the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority's rail modelling analysis looking ahead to 2037, which examines potential pressure points across the rail network as trade volumes grow.

The discussion will conclude with a comparison of the two forecasting approaches and invite members to share perspectives on how well the projections reflect on-the-ground realities and what they imply for Canada's transportation system as it supports trade diversification.

Speakers:

- Paul Sandhar-Cruz, Director General, Strategic Policy and Christian Dea, Chief Economist, Transport Canada
- Jennifer Natland, Vice President, Properties & Development, Vancouver Fraser Port Authority

#### Additional information:

Each forum concludes with an in camera, frank discussion among the most senior representatives of member organizations. Participation is limited to the Official representative from each member organization and excludes non-members. No reporting will take place.

10:30 am

Meeting adjourns

10:45 am **Board of Directors meeting**

11:30 am **Lunch** (all guests welcome)

12:00 pm **Board of Directors meeting adjourns**

12:30 pm **Tour: Global Transportation Hub & CPKC Intermodal Yard** (meet in hotel lobby)

3:30 pm **Tour Returns to Hotel Saskatchewan**

## GUEST SPEAKERS



### **DARRELL BRICKER**

**Chief Executive Officer**  
Ipsos Public Affairs

Darrell Bricker is a world-renowned expert in demography, public opinion, politics, and social trends, making him one of the most sought-after speakers for business, government, and organizational audiences.

As CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs, a global leader in public opinion research, Darrell has exclusive access to cutting-edge data on societal trends, consumer behavior, and political landscapes. His insider perspective enables him to provide timely, relevant insights into the shifts redefining economies, labour markets, and consumer preferences across Canada and around the world.

Most recently, Darrell was named as a Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC) Fellow, recognizing individuals for their “exceptional contributions to the research, analytics and insights profession in Canada.”

In 2025, he’s become a regular commentator on *The Hub*, and released a new book & speaking topic: *Breaking Point: How the Next Big Shift Puts Canada at Risk*. The nonfiction book by the authors of *The Big Shift* is described as a provocative look at contemporary fracture lines in Canada and became an instant bestseller.



### **JEFF NANKIVELL**

**President & CEO**  
Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APF)

Jeff Nankivell joined APF Canada as President and CEO on September 7, 2021.

Prior to this, he had a 33-year career in Canada's Foreign Service. He held various positions at the Canadian International Development Agency between 1988 and 2008, working on programs related to China, Russia, strategic policy, and international financial institutions. A fluent Mandarin speaker, he was posted three times to Canada's embassy in Beijing—in the development assistance section 1991-95 and 2000-04, and as Deputy Head of Mission 2008-11.

From 2011 to 2016, Jeff served in Ottawa/Gatineau as Director General responsible for Canada's official development assistance programs across Asia, first with the Canadian International Development Agency and then with Global Affairs Canada. In 2016 he was appointed Consul General of Canada in Hong Kong and Macao, serving in Hong Kong until May 2021.

Jeff holds a Master's degree in political sociology from the London School of Economics, BA in international relations from the University of Toronto and Université Laval, and certificate (one-year program) in Chinese language and culture from the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

## GUEST SPEAKERS



### SARA WILSHAW

**Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, International Trade and Chief Trade Commissioner**  
Global Affairs Canada

A senior government executive with over 30 years of public service experience, Ms. Wilshaw is currently Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, International Trade and Chief Trade Commissioner at Global Affairs Canada. In this role, she leads a global team that helps Canadian businesses secure and explore international markets, find new customers and partners, problem-solve, and grow through exports. Sara also leads work across global trade support services, including export finance, inbound foreign investment, inclusive trade and the promotion of responsible business conduct.

Prior to this, Sara served as Director of Operations at the Foreign and Defence Policy Secretariat at the Privy Council Office. In this role, she provided strategic analysis on Canada-U.S. relations, Latin America, trade, climate change, human rights, and the United Nations.

Sara's experience also includes serving as Director General for North America at Global Affairs Canada during the renegotiation of NAFTA, and as Canada's Consul General in Dallas. She has served abroad as Minister Commercial at the High Commission of Canada in India, at Canada's Permanent Mission to the World Trade Organization in Geneva, and at the Embassy of Canada in Japan.

Sara is a graduate of York University's International Relations and Economics program. She is married and has two children.



### RICHARD WONG

**Vice President, Regulatory & Operations**  
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP)

Richard Wong serves as Vice President, Regulatory and Operations at the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP). He spearheads major policy and regulatory initiatives spanning British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Atlantic Canada. Leading a highly skilled team, he engages with governments, regulators, and stakeholders nationwide to drive transformative change and position Canada as the preferred source of safe, secure, reliable, affordable, and responsibly produced energy.

Having joined CAPP in 2016 as the Manager of Operations, Richard successfully led a diverse team in advancing advocacy on policy and regulatory issues across Western Canada. His extensive background includes progressively senior roles in engineering and leadership within a major North American upstream oil and natural gas producer. These roles encompassed government relations, business development, reservoir engineering, completions engineering, and field operations.

A Calgary native, Richard holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from Queen's University at Kingston. He is a Professional Engineer and an active member of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta (APEGA). An avid long-distance runner and nature enthusiast, Richard is committed to ensuring sustainable growth of Canada's energy industry and helping shape tomorrow's energy landscape today.

## PARTICIPANTS

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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

**2026 Fall Member Forum**

November 18 & 19, 2026  
Vancouver, BC

**2027 Spring Member Forum**

April 20 & 21, 2027  
Winnipeg, MB