



Right Honourable Mark Carney
Prime Minister of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
Via email to mark.carney@parl.gc.ca

Wednesday, September 3, 2025

RE: OPEN LETTER REQUESTING REVIEW OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S STEEL POLICY

Prime Minister Carney,

Alberta and British Columbia are home to some of the most dynamic construction sectors in the country. Every day, our builders deliver critical infrastructure that families, communities, and businesses depend on – from hospitals and schools to water treatment facilities, multi-family housing, and transit lines.

But right now, many of these projects are being delayed and their costs are being driven higher because of the federal government's steel tariff rate quotas. These measures may have been introduced in response to U.S. trade policies, but today they have become a self-inflicted economic wound that penalizes western Canadians while serving a handful of central Canadian steel producers, most of them foreign-owned.

By way of background, the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association (ICBA) is the largest construction association in Canada, representing more than 4,500 member companies and clients, and supporting 300,000 Canadians. Our members are primarily construction contractors who build the housing, infrastructure, energy, and public projects that Canadians depend on every day.

Alberta and B.C. rely heavily on imported rebar. Edmonton's AltaSteel provides about 15% of the total rebar required for western Canada, leaving the majority to be sourced from global markets. In 2024 alone, Canada imported 581,430 metric tons of rebar – the majority for projects in Alberta and B.C. One company serving customers in B.C. and Alberta, imported nearly 100,000 metric tons after multiple unsuccessful attempts to buy from Canadian mills. Of the four central Canadian mills approached by this company, one doesn't make the rebar needed, and three declined to provide prices. Even if they wanted to ship rebar to western Canada, the math simply doesn't work: it costs about \$200 per ton to ship rebar by rail from Ontario to Vancouver, compared to \$35 by ocean freight from Asia.

The result is clear: Canada's retaliatory steel tariffs and quotas are artificially raising steel prices and restricting supply, leading to stalled projects and inflated bills for taxpayers. Rebar is one of

the very first trades on a job site – when it is delayed, the entire schedule slips. Right now, shortages and spikes are impacting projects such as:

- Transportation projects like the Capital Line South LRT Extension in Calgary and the Massey Tunnel and Pattullo Bridge replacements in the Vancouver area;
- Healthcare facilities like the Surrey Hospital;
- Water and wastewater upgrades like the Carstairs Reservoir in Alberta;
- New schools in Airdrie, Okotoks, Calgary, Chestermere, Surrey, Langley, and other growing communities;
- Public safety infrastructure such as the Leduc Fire Hall near Edmonton.

These aren't abstract concerns. One western Canadian construction supplier alone has more than \$393 million worth of contracts requiring more than 178,000 metric tonnes of rebar for public projects over the next 18 months. A 50% cost increase caused by tariffs, plus additional costs from delays, will land directly on taxpayers.

For decades, western Canadian contractors have been caught in a recurring cycle:

- Rebar is imported to meet local demand.
- Eastern mills lodge unfair trade complaints with Ottawa.
- The federal government imposes tariffs to “protect” central Canadian mills.
- Projects in Alberta and B.C. are delayed and come in over-budget, while eastern mills and their foreign shareholders reap the rewards.

Prime Minister, this is not “Team Canada.” It's a continuation of long-standing policies that have disadvantaged Alberta and B.C. for decades.

We are calling on your government to immediately create a **regional exemption** for western Canada from these steel tariffs. By doing so, you will:

- Lower barriers and allow builders to purchase steel at market prices.
- Keep critical projects on time and on budget.
- Support housing affordability, infrastructure expansion, and economic growth across the west.

It is essential that your government include western Canadian fabricators and contractors in the decision-making process. These are the people on the ground who understand the realities of the market and who are responsible for building the infrastructure Canadians rely on every day.

Alberta and B.C. builders are ready to get shovels in the ground and deliver projects for families and communities – but we cannot do that with one hand tied behind our backs by outdated and unfair steel policies.

The time to act is now.

Respectfully,



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CC

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B.C. and Alberta construction and energy stakeholders