

Transportation and Highway Safety ministers working together for a safe and successful recovery of the transportation sector in Canada

February 25, 2022, Ottawa – Today, Canada’s Minister of Transport, the Honourable Omar Alghabra, and the Minister of Transportation for Alberta, the Honourable Rajan Sawhney, virtually co-chaired the annual meeting of the Council of Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety. The meeting focused, among other things, on the continuation of the successful and safe recovery of the transportation sector from the global COVID-19 pandemic, as well as improving Canada’s supply chain.

Earlier today, in a separate session, ministers and leaders of Indigenous organizations discussed shared transportation issues, including infrastructure improvements, economic opportunities, access to remote and northern communities, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Federal, provincial and territorial ministers will continue to work together to enhance transportation safety, support trade, and collaborate on climate change efforts so Canadians benefit from safe, reliable, efficient, and modern transportation infrastructure.

Canada’s supply chain resilience and economic recovery

Finding solutions to keep essential goods reaching households in a timely fashion, as well as facilitating the movement of food, medicine, and other critical supplies for all Canadians is a priority for all ministers. Ministers discussed the detrimental impact of the pandemic, extreme weather events, and blockades on Canada’s supply chain over the past year.

Ministers also emphasized the importance of an efficient transportation system that is competitive and supports trade initiatives to ensure continued success of Canadian businesses on the global stage. To that end, ministers adopted the [Phase 2 report](#) from the federal, provincial, and territorial Task Force on the Pan-Canadian Competitive Trade Corridor Initiative. This report presents possible actions and potential next steps for intergovernmental collaboration such as enhancing information and data sharing; fostering innovation and technology adoption; regulatory alignment; and strengthening coordinated transportation planning to manage future demand. They also acknowledged that addressing congestion and improving the resiliency of trade corridors is a priority that requires continuous focus and investments.

Ministers discussed the importance of addressing labour and skills shortages to support resilient supply chains, and explore opportunities related to promotion of in-demand jobs across the transportation sector. They also aim to identify other collaborative approaches to make training more accessible and therefore increase hiring and retention rates in transportation-related jobs.

Strong and safe transportation services for Canadians

Ministers continued their discussions to ensure Canadians can count on strong, safe and resilient transportation services and facilities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, including transit, intercommunity bus services, aviation, and railways.

In February 2021, ministers created a working group to support the economic recovery of the air transport sector. Jurisdictions have worked together with aviation stakeholders to identify conditions necessary for the successful, safe recovery of air travel in Canada ([summary of findings](#)). Ministers agreed to closely monitor the pace of recovery and concerns of the air transportation sector, consider the need for future interventions, and provide timely communication to the aviation industry.

Addressing and adapting to climate change

Recognizing that all jurisdictions are working to address climate change, ministers discussed the importance of reducing pollution from the transportation sector while also increasing efforts to adapt and address infrastructure resiliency to our current and future climate. To this end, Ministers launched a working group to ensure continued collaboration on climate change adaptation in the transportation sector.

Advancing safety improvements

Ministers continue to support initiatives that strengthen commercial vehicle safety in Canada. Taking action in this area, ministers approved important amendments to the National Safety Code on Hours of Service (NSC-9), to align with the federal mandate on electronic logging devices (ELDs) for federally regulated carriers. ELDs help tracking and improving the accuracy of driving times so that commercial drivers remain within regulated allowable driving hours to reduce their fatigue.

In addition, ministers discussed the implementation of mandatory entry-level training for commercial drivers (NSC-16) in all provinces and territories so that commercial drivers have the essential skills and knowledge they need to safely operate their vehicles in Canada.

Ministers also agreed to include recreational vehicle (RV) trailers as a new category in the Memorandum of Understanding on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions, which will support greater alignment of provincial and territorial length limit regulations. A common, nationally based approach to regulation of RV trailer dimension limits will provide clear advice to RV dealers and consumers, the tourism sector, regulatory agencies and enforcement officials.

“The global COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge the transportation sector and Canada’s supply chain,” said Canada’s Minister of Transport, the Honourable Omar Alghabra. “We know how important it is to ensure that critical goods reach Canadian households on time, and the importance of workers in keeping our supply chains moving. My counterparts and I are working relentlessly to find solutions to help Canadians in the transportation issues they face, whether it’s with their businesses or their travels.”

“From floods to blockades and a global pandemic, there have been many challenges to how we transport goods across our jurisdictions and how we can travel throughout Canada,” said Minister of Alberta Transportation, the Honourable Rajan Sawhney. “I was pleased to discuss common issues with my federal, provincial and territorial colleagues as we look for ways to strengthen our supply chain and create resiliency through strategic infrastructure investments. Our shared goal is continuing to build a safe, modern and efficient transportation system that delivers goods on time, supports economic recovery and makes life better for all Canadians.”

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