



Pacific NorthWest Economic Region

March 3, 2025

Why U.S. - Canada Cooperation Matters More Than Ever

By Former Presidents of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER)

“Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners. And necessity has made us allies. Those whom nature hath so joined together, let no man put asunder.” - President John F. Kennedy

As former presidents of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER), we've witnessed firsthand how nonpartisan cross-border collaboration can transform challenges into mutual opportunities that transcend political differences. Since 1991, PNWER has championed cross-border partnerships to enhance the economic interdependencies that span the 10 states, provinces and territories of our bi-national region.

The success of PNWER's work is made possible by giving the region's public and private sectors a seat at the table – governments, businesses, Indigenous leaders, nonprofits, academics and community stakeholders – to unite across borders and solve common challenges. Collaboration is at the heart of PNWER, enabling our region to advance practical solutions that create long lasting benefits for us all.

We are disheartened by the potential erosion of the U.S.-Canada relationship that comes with the threat of tariffs. Our successful history of trust, mutual respect and cooperation must not be shattered by a failure to engage in good faith with one another. Through world wars, terrorist attacks, economic downturns, trade disputes and a global pandemic, we have worked and fought side by side to address challenges and have grown stronger as a result.

The U.S. - Canada trade relationship is woven into the fabric of each of our economies. This historic partnership shares the world's largest and most comprehensive trading relationship, with nearly \$2.7 billion USD worth of goods and services crossing the border each day. These products support some of the industries we rely upon most, such as food, energy, manufacturing and agriculture. Millions of jobs for both Americans and Canadians are dependent on this incredible partnership. In the spirit of the 2020 United States - Mexico - Canada Agreement (USMCA/CUSMA), we must protect the U.S.-Canada trade relationship and work together to honor the agreement during the upcoming review process.

As neighbors, our two nations have built a prosperous and exemplary relationship that is the envy of the world. We must not take this relationship for granted. The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region demonstrates the power of this relationship – how a bridge between states, provinces, territories, industries and sectors can drive real growth and solve shared challenges together. Recognizing that our common interests outweigh our differences, we encourage our nation’s leaders to embrace this model of collaboration.

Over three successful decades, PNWER has proven that the way forward lies in reaffirming our commitment to collaboration, fostering consistent, open dialogue between public and private sectors, and strengthening the bonds that have united our countries for 150 years.

Our nations face real challenges today. Let’s face them together – as neighbors and friends – to preserve and strengthen the most successful bi-national partnership in the history of the world.

Sincerely,

Former Presidents of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER)

David Coutts, AB, 1997-1999

Jeff Morris, WA, 2001-2002

Barry Penner, BC, 2002-2003

Rob Renner, AB, 2004-2005

Jim Kenyon, YT, 2006-2007

George Eskridge, ID, 2007-2008

John van Dongen, BC, 2008-2009

Lesil McGuire, AK, 2009-2010

Mel Knight, AB, 2010-2011

David Ramsay, NWT, 2014-2015

Curt McKenzie, ID, 2015-2016

Arnie Roblan, OR, 2017-2018

Mike Cuffe, MT, 2019-2021

Richard Gotfried, AB, 2021-2022

Chuck Winder, ID, 2022-2023

Rick Glumac, BC, 2023-2024

About PNWER

The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region is a public/private non-profit organization created by statute in 1991. Member jurisdictions include Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington, and the Canadian provinces and territories of Alberta, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan, and the Yukon. PNWER's mission is to increase the economic well-being and quality of life for all citizens of the region; identify and promote "models of success" and serve as a conduit to exchange information. For more information on PNWER, visit www.pnwer.org.