



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Task Force Created to Support Agricultural Sector

The Greater Summerside Chamber of Commerce recognizes the significant contribution the agriculture industry, in particular the potato industry, has on our region and the GSCC membership base.

The impact of the US border closures to Prince Edward Island exports will have an immediate and long-term negative impact. The potato sector represents as much as \$1.3 billion to our Island economy, any unplanned disruption will immediately be reflected in discretionary spending of farmers, industry staff, and ripple through our membership businesses and the Island economy more generally.

The potato industry in PEI is a massive economic driver in the province, contributing over \$500 million to the provincial GDP and creating over 5,000+ jobs. The recent export ban on all Island potatoes to the United States is a serious concern for our members and the region.

In an effort to determine if and how the GSCC can help, we have struck a task force (chaired by Filip Hrga, partner at McLellan Brennan Hrga) to support this industry and our greater Summerside economy. We have requested a meeting with our local MP Bobby Morrissey to raise concerns on behalf of our members in addition to correspondence with City officials, the Minister of Agriculture, and the Minister of Economic Development.

“The Chamber remains a steadfast advocate for its members and the greater Island community. We stand in support with all of our farmers and are doing what we can to help our farmers navigate this difficult and stressful time,” said Chamber President Tyler Kowalski. “We encourage our food service members to buy local produce and potatoes in particular, and call on all Islanders to try to focus their holiday shopping locally as we anticipate the effects of the potato ban will ripple out through the rest of our Island economy in the coming months. We will continue to press our local, provincial, and federal officials for meetings and action on this issue and we encourage any Islanders that wish to assist to contact our task force to discuss ways to help or get involved with the solution.”

The Greater Summerside Chamber of Commerce stands with our members, the Government of Prince Edward Island, and the PEI Potato Board as we call for the Federal Government to immediately address this urgent matter so that PEI potato farmers can resume exports to the



United States and to have the federal government urgently announce plans for an adequately funded diversion program to offset the growing and expected losses faced by our Island farmers.

However, we can also help our fellow Islanders ourselves. The GSCC is encouraging all relevant retail and food service industry members to make an effort to purchase local, fresh PEI potatoes to supply their businesses. Also, with the potato export ban being expected to affect many Islanders, we would encourage not just our members, but all Islanders, to shop local this holiday season and continue to support their neighbours.

About The Greater Summerside Chamber of Commerce

Established in 1900, the Greater Summerside Chamber of Commerce is a volunteer organization made up of business and professional people sharing a common goal — the economic development of the Greater Summerside area. Small and large businesses from virtually every sector and profession form the membership.

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