

Deputy Prime Minister



Vice-première ministre

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0A6

February 19, 2020

Dear Mr. Blaikie:

I am writing in response to your letter dated December 16, 2019, in which the New Democratic Party (NDP) proposes that the Government of Canada modify the process by which the government negotiates and ratifies free trade agreements.

The negotiation of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) was a transparent and open process, during which the Government of Canada engaged with over 1,300 stakeholders, including business, labour unions, civil society, Indigenous peoples and youth, and received over 47,000 written submissions. The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that the views and voices of Canadians are heard during the negotiations process and that the final outcomes of free trade negotiations benefit Canadian businesses, workers and communities.

Accordingly, in the light of the NDP proposal and to add further transparency to the free trade negotiations process, the Government will revise the *Policy on Tabling Treaties in Parliament* as follows:

- To require that a notice of intent to enter into negotiations towards a new free trade agreement be tabled in the House of Commons at least 90 calendar days prior to the commencement of negotiations. Under normal parliamentary procedures, the notice of intent would be referred to the Committee of jurisdiction (which in the case of FTAs is the CIIT).
- To require objectives for negotiations towards a new free trade agreement to be tabled in the House of Commons at least 30 calendar days prior to the commencement of negotiations. Under normal parliamentary procedures, those objectives would be referred to the Committee of jurisdiction (which in the case of FTAs is the CIIT).
- To require an economic impact assessment to be tabled in the House of Commons at the time of the introduction of implementing legislation for a new free trade agreement.

- For the purposes of the changes to the *Policy*, the following definitions would apply:
 - A free trade agreement is a comprehensive trade agreement between Canada and at least one other party.
 - An economic impact assessment is a report providing estimates of overall economic impact of a free trade agreement on the Canadian economy, including changes in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), trade flows, employment, and income as well as some sector-specific estimates for the sectors directly addressed in the free trade agreement.

In exchange for these changes, I understand that we can count on the support of the NDP to ensure that Bill C-4 (*An Act to implement the Agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico*) is passed expeditiously by the House of Commons; concluding debate at committee stage by February 28; and supporting the government in moving Bill C-4 through the House of Commons.

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation to the New Democratic Party for its willingness to work with the government to ensure the timely ratification of the CUSMA.

Yours sincerely,



The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
Intergovernmental Affairs