



Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1S 0A4

October 31, 2023

Dear Senator,

I am writing today on behalf of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance to **request that you reject Bill C-282, *An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management)***.

C-282 is profoundly contrary to the national interest of a trading country like Canada.

As was stated in an open letter issued on October 23 by a group of the finest trade negotiators to have represented Canada over the past decades, *“The Bill would seriously handicap Canadian Governments – irrespective of their political affiliation -- and their trade negotiators to accommodate the give-and-take of future trade negotiations to open up new markets and secure valued access for Canadian products, services and investments.”*

Simply put, this would be a terrible outcome for a trading nation like Canada. It would damage our credibility as a country that supports fair and open trade, weaken our hand in future negotiations and ultimately, leave us poorer.

The timing could hardly be worse in that we would be weakening ourselves as we approach a period of high potential risk to our trading relationship with our closest trade partner, the United States. The upcoming “Joint Review” of CUSMA, which will begin in July 2026, risks being derailed by weakening the hand of our trade negotiators and providing an easy target for their American counterparts.

The argument that C-282 somehow protects rural communities ignores the fact that many rural communities produce food and other goods for export. The sectors CAFTA represents support over a million jobs in urban and rural communities across Canada.

The agri-food sector is export oriented as we sell over half of our products in over 150 countries around the world. For example, anywhere from 50% of our beef to 90% of our pulses end up on plates around the world. There is no reason to harm the many to protect the interests of the few.

It has also been argued that Canada’s food security is somehow advanced through C-282. The reality is the opposite. Canadians consume a variety of food, some of which is produced here, and some of which is imported. By undermining our trade outcomes, Bill C-282 risks limiting the variety in Canadians’ diets, with the corresponding risks to nutritional outcomes.

International trade serves as the backbone of Canada’s food sector and the global food system. Trade serves as the bridge to get food from where it is grown to where it is needed. In doing so, trade enables food security while creating economic opportunities for producers, farmers, and SMEs. Trade is also a key factor in the sustainable and efficient use of scarce global resources.

C-282 unfortunately passed quickly through the House of Commons without taking the time for proper Parliamentary scrutiny. The Senate has the constitutional role of examining legislation thoroughly, without being driven by the short-term perspective that comes from the electoral cycle. We wish to underline that C-282, as a Private Member's Bill, is not government legislation. This provides greater reason for proper examination in Committee, giving diverse stakeholders and experts the opportunity to point out their concerns to Senators.

The Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) represents the 90% of farmers, producers, processors, and agri-food exporters that rely on access to global markets. To be clear, CAFTA does not oppose supply management, it opposes this draft legislation that threatens our future.

The Senate is often referred to as our nation's Chamber of "Sober Second Thought." We ask you to exercise this in the study of C-282 to protect our national interest.

On behalf of CAFTA Members,

Greg Northey

CAFTA President