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A Canadian Perspective on the New England States

Marc Jacques

Consulate General of Canada to the United States in Boston

Canada has had, and continues to have, a special relationship with the New England states. In addition to being not only the largest trading partner of the United States in general, Canada has a particularly significant rapport with this American region, especially in economic, cultural, and historical terms. That relationship has been particularly important in relation to the Canadian provinces that the northern New England states border (Quebec and New Brunswick) plus the direct water transport connection that exists between the Province of Nova Scotia and the State of Maine and the more general comparison that can be made between the regions of New England and the Canadian Maritime Provinces.

The historic pattern of immigration from these Canadian provinces to New England (culminating in the large scale migration of French-speaking workers of the early 20th century, known, historically, as *la Frontière francophone*) has left a permanent impression upon this region. These ties bind Canada (especially the provinces that border these states and, also, the Atlantic Canada region with which New England shares certain geographical, cultural, and economic similarities) to a special relationship with New England that persists in growing, as it has during the past year.

The Government of Canada continues to strengthen its relationship with New England and the United States, in general, in 2009 and 2010, notably in regard to its partnerships on border security, Afghanistan and the international

war on terror, being a secure and reliable source of energy, Arctic sovereignty, and ensuring that Canada and the United States remain competitive in the global economic market. Canada's Ambassador to the United States, Gary Doer, is actively engaging strategic decision makers at both the federal and state levels to lead the discussion on these, and other, important policy objectives that are important to the two nations.

Canada is looking forward to hosting the upcoming G8 and G20 conferences in Ontario this summer. At the G8, the focus will be on security concerns and human welfare, with Canada championing a major initiative to improve the health of women and children in the world's poorest regions. At the G20, the focus will be on fiscal and economic cooperation, with Canada championing the full implementation of government stimulus measures and the opposition of trade protectionism by promoting liberalization of trade and investment through binational and regional negotiations.

On the New England front, Canada continues to work closely with the six regional governors and the Congressional delegation on priorities such as border policy, energy efficiency and green energy, transportation issues, and continued importation of energy products to the New England market. Examples of these partnerships are the recent opening of a new border crossing at Calais, Maine and St. Stephen, New Brunswick, Hydro Québec's work to expand transmission to New Hampshire, and the potential energy corridor from New Brunswick to New England through Maine—a project that recently received initial approval from the Maine Legislature.

The largest impact of the Canada-New England relationship though, will continue to be commerce. Over \$CDN 34.5 billion of bilateral trade was exchanged in 2008, with each of the six New England states having Canada as its #1 export market. This trade relationship results in over 371,000 jobs in New England, a fact which enforces Canada's advocacy efforts to combat the Buy American legislation which is impeding trade and investment between Canada

and the United States. The Consul General of Canada in Boston and his colleagues throughout the United States will continue to discuss this matter with business and political leaders with the goal of finding a resolution which will ensure that Canadian and American companies can continue to freely trade goods and services without impediment.

The strong ties between Canada and New England have been exemplified in academic terms, not only in terms of educational exchanges (including American and Canadian students from this part of the continent who have attended each other's institutions of higher education) but in terms of the strong Canadian studies and North American scholarship that is generated, particularly, among New England's strong and varied colleges and universities. Canada's equally strong and varied colleges and universities (especially in Quebec and the Maritimes) frequently reciprocate that academic and scholarly interest. The ongoing support of the New England Political Science Association by the Canadian Consulate General in Boston is symbolic of that close and productive relationship. It is anticipated that all of these ties will continue to develop during the coming year.