



**CANADIAN FEDERATION  
OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS**

*In business for your business.*

635-8th Avenue S.W., Suite 1470  
Calgary, Alberta T2P 3M3

March 17, 2026

*Sent via email*

**Subject: Urging Canadian leaders to keep momentum on reducing internal trade barriers at upcoming meeting**

Dear CIT Representatives:

Canada is at a pivotal moment for internal trade. Over the past year, governments have taken some of the most significant steps in nearly a decade—from the signing of the Canadian Mutual Recognition Agreement on the Sale of Goods (CMRA) to new legislation and memoranda of understanding (MOUs). These efforts signal genuine momentum toward a more unified Canadian economy.

But momentum alone will not deliver results for businesses. With your next meeting approaching, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) urges the CIT to act decisively.

CFIB represents 103,000 small- and medium-sized businesses across the country. Every day, business owners tell us how internal trade barriers hold them back—whether it's unnecessary paperwork, duplicative testing, inconsistent provincial rules, or the simple inability to ship a product across a border. They are encouraged by recent developments, but many worry that without coordination, governments could simply replace old barriers with new, more complicated ones. Reciprocal requirements, broad exceptions, and slow-moving pilots risk recreating the very patchwork these reforms were meant to fix.

CFIB's latest [State of Internal Trade report](#) highlights both the progress made in 2025 and the challenges ahead. The CMRA is a major step forward, but only if all jurisdictions implement it consistently, with minimal carveouts and clear guidance. The spread of mutual recognition legislation is positive, but uneven rules and unclear reciprocity designations are already creating confusion; and while MOUs have helped build momentum, they do not deliver the certainty or enforceability businesses need.

Meanwhile, critical gaps remain in key areas: services, food, alcohol, and labour mobility. The status of the interprovincial trucking MOU remains opaque. Direct-to-consumer alcohol implementation remains slow and inconsistent despite a pending agreement deadline to have this fully in place by May 2026. The longstanding barrier preventing provincially inspected food from moving across provincial borders continues to shut small processors out of expansion.

The decisions taken in the coming months will determine whether Canada finally moves toward a truly open internal market—or slips back into familiar patterns of fragmented rules and slow progress.

**CFIB urges the Committee to prioritize the following at your upcoming meeting:**

1. **Quickly expand the Canadian Mutual Recognition Agreement** - including all services in the CMRA by the end of 2026 as directed by the [Council of the Federation in January 2026](#), taking exceptions only where necessary to speed up implementation. Work to include remaining barriers—food, alcohol, labour—beginning with a clear CIT mandate to develop a workplan and timelines.
2. **Ensure consistent and transparent implementation of the CMRA**, with clear guidance on exceptions, public timelines, and regular reporting on progress.
3. **Commit to a unilateral approach to mutual recognition legislation**, removing reciprocal requirements that add unnecessary red tape and create uncertainty.
4. **Release full details of the interprovincial trucking MOU**, including which rules will be recognized, enforcement mechanisms, and implementation schedules.
5. **Resolve the federal-provincial impasse on food movement** by initiating a coordinated traceability and safety framework that will allow provincially inspected products to move freely.
6. **Accelerate timelines for direct-to-consumer alcohol shipment**, ensuring all jurisdictions meet or exceed the May 2026 commitment.
7. **Publish a multi-year CIT action plan** with clear deliverables, timelines, and mechanisms to track outcomes for businesses.

Small businesses are watching closely. They are ready to grow, hire, innovate, and expand across provincial and territorial borders, but they need governments to clear the path. Acting now will ensure that the progress made over the last year becomes lasting change, not another missed opportunity.

CFIB stands ready to support your work and provide insights from the small business community. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please contact Keyli Loeppky at [Keyli.loepky@cfib.ca](mailto:Keyli.loepky@cfib.ca) or (587) 580-9140.

Sincerely,



Corinne Pohlmann  
Executive Vice-President, Advocacy



Keyli Loeppky  
Director, Alberta & Interprovincial Affairs

cc: Internal Trade Representatives (ITRs)  
RCT Representatives