

Western
insight.

**National
impact.**

Messages in brief

“Western Canada is the second largest region in Canada in terms of population and GDP – and yet we have trouble getting heard in Ottawa. Our mission critical at the Canada West Foundation, and something we are very good at, is putting the West’s point of view to decision-makers in Ottawa and beyond.”

– **Honourable Gary Mar, KC**, President and CEO,
Canada West Foundation

“I am proud to let my name stand as Chair of the Canada West Foundation as it is the only policy think tank focused exclusively on resolving challenges facing the West. Our experts consistently pinpoint issues critical to Western prosperity and bring forward pragmatic solutions that benefit the Canadian economy.”

– **Honourable Doug Black, KC**, Chair of the Board,
Canada West Foundation

Our impact

137 Government briefings	19 Reports	66 Hosted events
78 Conference presentations	54 Op-Eds	75 Policy briefs
497 Media interviews	3863 Media mentions	312K Webpage views

Bringing the West to Canada: solution by solution

The Canada West Foundation is the *only* policy shop that speaks exclusively to issues that matter to the West. Shortage of skilled workers? We're on it. Big changes ahead in trade with the U.S.? Our finger's on the pulse. Delays, delays, delays in major project approvals? We're tired of it too. We work within three policy areas – Trade and Trade Infrastructure, Resources, Environment and Economy and Skills, Innovation and Productivity – to address competitive challenges facing Canada from the unique perspective of the West. Through research, convening and meeting with government and industry leaders, we dig deep to arrive at practical solutions that work.

Resources, Environment & Economy

Recommendations for faster approval processes

Following publication in 2023 of the report *Competitive Canada: Recommendations to improve federal assessment for major projects*, Director Marla Orenstein, Resources, Environment and Economy, took part in or hosted working sessions with all provincial and federal energy and mining ministers, the Ministerial Working Group on Regulatory Efficiency for Clean Growth Projects and ten federal agencies.

Through 2024, CWF was asked to provide opinion and recommendations to numerous organizations and departments including the Prime Minister's Office, Privy Council, policy shapers at the Conservative Party of Canada, the Alberta government, the Canadian Energy Regulator and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

Keeping the lights on

In the face of increasing demands for electricity, our July 2023 report *Electricity Systems Across Western Canada: A Landscape Analysis* highlighted significant differences in electricity resources and systems operation and implications for the four western provinces. Then, at a September CWF event in Edmonton, we asked the audience: If you were tasked with upgrading Alberta's electricity system, how would you prioritize price, emissions and reliability? No two tables had the same allocation. Clearly, this is a topic where consensus is difficult to find – but that's the point. Electricity policy is not easy.

An eye on energy transition

Our work in clean energy drew the attention of the Global Gas Innovation Forum (GGIF) which asked CWF to develop two reports (both unpublished): CCUS as a tool for LNG innovation was prepared for the GGIF while *Fuelling a Secure Energy Future* was prepared for the LNG2023 Diplomatic Forum, which took place as part of the GGIF.

Trade & Trade Infrastructure

Deep-dive into the Indo-Pacific

In December 2023, the Canada West Foundation partnered with the Institute for Peace and Diplomacy to co-host the Indo-Pacific Strategy Forum in Ottawa. The conference was attended by over 200 participants from federal and provincial governments, academia, business and industry, foreign embassies and key stakeholder groups in the Indo-Pacific region.

Back in the West, we hosted two roundtables in Alberta to canvas Alberta's industry and ag sectors on the federal Indo-Pacific Economic Framework and opportunities. We produced three province-specific backgrounders that identified opportunities for businesses in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba in the Federal Indo-Pacific strategy.

Keep your friends close

CWF is a leader in advancing and defending Western Canada's unique trade issues within North America. We participate in track-two diplomacy opportunities and publish the only regular publication in Canada, the *North America Brief*, that offers monthly coverage of Canadian relations with the U.S. and Mexico.

Building the road toward a national plan

At the July 2023 Council of the Federation (CoF) meeting, Gary Mar, CEO and President, Carlo Dade, Director of Trade and Trade Infrastructure and key stakeholders met with seven premiers to advocate for a national plan to address the state of Canada's trade infrastructure. The Premiers' communique unanimously supported a strategic infrastructure plan along the lines of the Canada West Foundation report *Shovel Worthy to Shovel Ready*, which argues for national planning for sustained investment in trade transportation systems. In November 2023, Gary Mar and our collaboration partners met with Manitoba's new Premier Wab Kinew to advocate for the development of a national trade infrastructure plan.

Skills, Innovation & Productivity

Matching people with jobs and jobs with people

In today's rapidly changing workplace, employers often struggle to express the skills they're looking for and candidates have trouble describing why they are a good fit. We provided practical solutions to the problem, including better ways to credential expertise in the trades and other areas, in our report *Matching people with jobs and jobs with people*.

Youth retention in Manitoba

CWF, with the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, published *Finding Their Place: Manitoba youth mobility*. The study found that while the primary reason youth moved was economic, they were also concerned about safety and living in communities rich in social and career opportunities.

The case for reading

We published, with support from Calgary Reads and Rotary Club Calgary, *The Case for Literacy in Alberta: Life is hard when you can't read*, which offered recommendations to help boost literacy rates for Albertans of every age.

Fiscal Federalism Policy Network

We continue to support the Fiscal Federalism Policy Network, which published two reports in 2023 *The Road Ahead: Rethinking Fiscal Federalism for the 21st Century* and *Tax Point Transfers in Canada: An Historical Review and Key Considerations for the Future*.

Measuring impact

Some of the ways we measure impact are by tracking our engagement efforts, monitoring our media presence and through the quality and number of collaborations we have with groups and individuals. By any measure, we continue to punch above our weight on national and provincial issues.

Collaboration

Partnering with businesses and professional associations increases impact and speaks with a louder voice.

Mobilizing on Bill C-59

When new rules targeting greenwashing were included in amendments to the Competition Act, CWF played a lead role mobilizing opposition to the change. We held a roundtable for stakeholders and were lead author on a submission to the Competition Bureau's public consultation. Canada West Foundation, the Canadian Cattle Association, Avatar Innovations, Enserva, Botaneco, RETI, ICBA Alberta, ICBA BC and the Mining Association of Canada, signed the joint submission urging the enactment Bill C-59 provisions be delayed so guidelines could be developed. [Read the submission.](#)

Action on CUSMA

With the 2026 review of CUSMA on the horizon, we contributed to a first-of-its-kind consortium of Alberta organizations that pushed for strategic reforms to secure the West's competitive edge. CWF, the Business Council of Alberta, Calgary Chamber of Commerce, Calgary Economic Development, and Canadian Global Affairs Institute jointly submitted recommendations to the federal government emphasizing the harmonization of trade regulations across the continent. [Read the submission.](#)

Through opinion pieces, testimony to House of Commons committees, webinars and our North America Brief, we have brought our expertise on the North American trade agreement to the public. For a sampling of our work see:

Mexico's 2024 election and Western Canada: Trade, Politics and the USMCA – CWF Webinar, Carlo Dade, Pierre Alarie, Sergio Alcocer, Antonio Garza

2026 CUSMA Review: A western Canadian perspective – House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade, Carlo Dade

Trump's tweet, Canada's response plus Project 2025 deep dive – North America Brief 22, Carlo Dade

Canada can't repeat mistake of overlooking Mexico in North American trade talks – Calgary Herald, Gary Mar and Carlo Dade

Media outreach

Mainstream media are a key way to reach decision makers and CWF consistently provides expertise and analysis on the issues of the day. CEO Gary Mar, for instance, has appeared 261 times on CTV's Power Play in the last two years.

497 Media interviews

Biggest takeaways of the 2024 U.S. presidential election – CTV's Power Play, Gary Mar

Premier Danielle Smith slams Ottawa's oil and gas emissions cap regulations – Edmonton Journal, Colleen Collins

U.S. president-elect Donald Trump has promised an America-first approach to trade, with huge tariffs to back it up – CBC's The Current, Carlo Dade

54 Op-eds

Alienating Mexico won't help Canada at the negotiating table with Trump – Financial Post, Carlo Dade

Can Canada build its way to prosperity? We need many more skilled workers first – The Hub, Jeff Griffiths

Jasper fires show public policy shouldn't be solely driven by public sentiment – Globe and Mail, Gary Mar

Vancouver port expansion would benefit Prairies – Regina Leader Post, Gary Mar and Colleen Collins

What does Donald Trump truly want with his tariff threat? – Globe and Mail, Carlo Dade

Why a U.S. global tariff is the existential trade threat facing Canada – Financial Post, Dan Ciuriak and Carlo Dade

Economics and youth mobility – Winnipeg Free Press, Chuck Davidson and Stephany Laverty

Engagement

66 Hosted events

Real people making real decisions: Premier's panel
195 attendees. Participants: Former premiers Christy Clark, Ed Stelmach, Gary Doer with moderator Erin O'Toole

Hair on Fire: Toward a more balanced view of post-election Canada-U.S. relations

106 attendees. Participants: Chris Sands, Director, Canada Institute, Woodrow Wilson Center with moderator Gary Mar

Are we investable?

94 attendees. Ellis Ross, BC MLA; Mike Davies, Trans Mountain; Nitin Sathawane; Mphasis with moderator Gary Mar

78 Conference presentations

Careening off the Rollercoaster: Managing Canada-U.S. Relations

Host: Canadian Chamber of Commerce, CWF: Gary Mar

22nd International Conference on Open Learning and Recognition Practices, Technologies and Policies

Host: ePIC 2024, CWF: Jeff Griffiths

USMCA after the election

Host: Mexico Institute, CWF: Carlo Dade

137 Briefs to government

Meetings with decision makers in government move the needle on policy change. In the last year, CWF met with

- 13 premiers
- Federal and provincial ministers of energy, mines, natural resources, environment
- Deputy ministers
- Privy council and PMO
- Municipal politicians
- Ambassadors, Consul Generals and other heads of state

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