

PRESS RELEASE  
RICHMOND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
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**RICHMOND BUSINESS EXECUTIVES TO PRIME MINISTER: "FIX THE PORT CONTAINER SYSTEM"**

Senior Richmond business executives are calling on the Prime Minister and Premier Campbell to fix the Lower Mainland container flow system to prevent any more costly port shutdowns.

"Our trade with Asian countries and businesses has taken a serious hit both internally and with our trading relationships with China, Taiwan, India, Philippines and other Pacific Rim nations because of the disruption of container traffic," said Cynthia Chen, Chair of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce. "Lower Mainland businesses have suffered, and so has the reputation of Vancouver and Fraser-Surrey ports because of this. We need to protect and enhance the reputation of our ports so we can continue to increase our trading relationships with Asia."

Jack Lee, Co-Chair of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce CEO Exchange -- a group of senior Richmond business executives -- echoed the Chamber's concerns. "Hundreds of B.C. and Asian businesses depend on the free flow of cargo through our ports," he said. "Our governments, ports and businesses have worked incredibly hard to build a solid reputation of reliability in the transportation of goods to, through and from our ports with Asian trading partners."

"This latest disruption points out how easy it is to lose port competitiveness and reminds us that it doesn't take much to lose the business we've been building so successfully over the decades," said Wayne Duzita Co-Chair of the CEO Exchange Forum. "There are lessons to be learned from this container disruption and we want to be a part of the solution. That's why we're calling on Prime Minister Martin and Premier Campbell to meet with business and Asian trading leaders. We need a system in place that prevents major trading disruptions like we've just had, and yet still protects the interests of the service sector that serves the port."

"We are hopeful that the Premier and Prime Minister will see this as an opportunity to seek additional ways to enhance the free flow of goods through our ports to grow our trade with Pacific Rim countries," said Duzita.

The Richmond Chamber of Commerce represents 1,100 businesses in Richmond, B.C. The Richmond Chamber of Commerce CEO Exchange comprises a group of over 40 senior business executives who meet quarterly to discuss issues and opportunities to increase business and international trade for Richmond and Lower Mainland businesses.

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