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APPROACHES FOR A CANADIAN RESPONSE

To succeed, companies must continually check their operations, their markets and their competitive trading position. The transportation factor requires close assessment, particularly in light of the higher costs to distant offshore markets. Among others, the transportation analysis must incorporate the questions:

- have cargo restrictions had a significant impact on costs in some markets?
- is the trend worsening or improving?

Presuming the answers are yes to both, the analysis could proceed to further questions:

- is it prudent to consider new approaches for both companies and for the Canadian government that might be taken to insure future competitiveness?
- should companies and associations start immediately to establish their preferences in light of the time required for consensus and governmental action?

It is likely that companies with sufficient resources can accomplish a great deal on their own to preserve and build up foreign markets. However, foreign governments often impose requirements that present an insurmountable obstacle for a company acting alone. A foreign government's action often could only be addressed by the Canadian government's reaction. Many matters can only be considered on a government-to-government basis because a single Canadian company may not have the time or means available to counteract a foreign government's measures.

If the corporate analysis proceeds in the above fashion, several approaches seem to be available for industry to consider and to establish their preferences for the involvement of the Canadian government. Without any pretense to being exhaustive, these approaches would seem to include the following:

- STATUS QUO
- SUPPORT COMMERCIAL SOLUTIONS
- GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION
- BILATERAL NEGOTIATION
- MULTILATERAL APPROACH
- DEFENSIVE MEASURES
- COMBINATION OF THE FOREGOING