

Will the Smart Border make any difference once fully implemented?

Statistical data are not yet available that could reflect any significant change, either positive or negative. It is fair to say that large firms may gain more than small firms, as secure trade seems already to be changing the competitive playing field. While any company that can provide accurate data, documents and consistent compliance with new trade regulations stands to win by having its shipments fast-tracked (a sure competitive advantage), larger firms can handle these new challenges better than smaller firms due to greater trade volume and capital resources. As if to prove the point, the first companies to have signed up for FAST are Ford Motor Company, General Motors, DaimlerChrysler, Target, Sara Lee Corporation, Kodak Canada, and Dupont.

To summarize, economically, we do not yet understand the ramifications of "secure trade" on growth. Although long-term predictions lead us to conclude that we might be seeing freer trade, as the official view promises, we will have to wait and see. Nevertheless, there are clear downside risks as the cost of undertaking international trade has increased.

The 'On the Ground View'

A visit to one crossing point in particular reveals many "road-blocks" currently facing secure trade—both figurative and literal. The Ambassador Bridge connecting Windsor and Detroit was so named to "symbolize the visible expression of friendship of two peoples with like ideas and ideals."⁶⁴ The United States exports more over the Ambassador Bridge than it does to China, Germany or the United Kingdom. For Canada, the bridge represents an even more critical link: approximately eight per

⁶⁴ Named by builder, Joseph Bower. Information available at <http://www.ambassadorbridge.com/facts.html>.