



Public Safety Canada  
269 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa ON K1A 0P8  
Submitted via email: [EMEngagement-EngagementsGU@ps-sp.gc.ca](mailto:EMEngagement-EngagementsGU@ps-sp.gc.ca)

February 27, 2026

Re: Public engagement on how to strengthen federal leadership in emergency management

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of our members across the fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association is pleased to offer comments to Public Safety Canada's public engagement on strengthening federal leadership in emergency management.

#### **About CPMA**

Based in Ottawa, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) is a not-for-profit organization representing companies active in the marketing of fresh fruit and vegetables in Canada, from the farm gate to the dinner plate, spanning the entire produce industry. The Association's members include major growers, shippers, packers, and marketers; importers and exporters; transportation and logistics firms; brokers, distributors and wholesalers; retailers, and foodservice distributors; and fresh cut operators and processors. Founded in 1925, CPMA is proud to represent over 900 domestic and international members who are responsible for 90% of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada.

#### **General comments**

The fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain is a significant contributor to Canada's economy, adding to \$18 billion in GDP and supporting more than 188,000 jobs in rural and urban communities from coast to coast to coast<sup>1</sup>. In addition to our sector's economic contributions, we also provide Canadian families with safe and nutritious food that is crucial to supporting their health and well-being.

Ensuring overall access to a variety of nutritious food for all communities across Canada year-round, including during emergencies, means supporting the entire agri-food value chain. The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as recent devastating weather events and disruptions at ports of entry, have shone a light on the serious potential impacts of such events on food availability in Canada.

CPMA's comments below are focused on two areas which we believe are key to Canada's ability to prepare, respond and recover from emergencies: federal leadership and coordination and building capacity and partnerships.

---

<sup>1</sup> Signal49 Research (formerly Conference Board of Canada), 2025

### **Federal leadership and coordination**

It is important to recognize that the fresh produce supply chain is one of the most highly globally integrated supply chains in the world. The high volume and perishability of fruits and vegetables means that longer dwell times at ports of entry due to disruptions of any kind can not only delay delivery and increase costs for industry and consumers, but can also result in lost sales, product spoilage and food waste.

Therefore, the supply chain linkages of transportation, border access and ports of entry and exit are key to ensuring the smooth flow of essential goods across our border, which is critical to supporting food security across the country. This must be top of mind for government in planning for, responding to, and recovering from an emergency.

CPMA emphasizes that the federal government has an important leadership role to play in coordinating both proactive and reactive efforts in emergency management, including the following recommended measures:

- Committing sufficient, ongoing capital investment to enable infrastructure improvements, including at Canadian ports, and allocating dedicated funding to projects supporting and strengthening more resilient agri-food supply chains, including the enhancement of cold chain infrastructure.
- Coordinating efforts across relevant government departments to work proactively with port authorities and other stakeholders to put in place a formalized process to allow the movement of food and essential goods through Canada's ports of entry in the event of emergency events or disruptions.
- Establishing priority lanes at ports of entry and expanding Trusted Trader programs to further streamline the movement of essential and perishable products across the Canadian border, including specific protocols to maintain this fluidity during emergencies.
- Recognizing and investing in the Ontario Food Terminal as a nationally significant food security hub, including committing targeted capital funding to modernize and expand its infrastructure, enhance cold storage and logistics capacity, and strengthen its role as a critical aggregation and distribution point that helps ensure a stable, reliable supply of fresh fruit and vegetables to communities across Ontario and all of Canada, particularly during emergencies and supply chain disruptions.
- Implementing a clear communications protocol both between federal departments and other government partners, and between the federal government, stakeholders and the broader public. Contingency plans must also be put in place to account for situations in which the standard communications protocol is not possible, such as a systems outage.
- Putting in place a regular cross-departmental practice of evaluating success and identifying lessons learned following emergencies to build on effective measures and address gaps in future emergency management, both in terms of communication flows and operational protocols, but also in terms of regulatory and/or operational flexibility needed to facilitate response efforts.

CPMA was pleased to see the federal government's launch of the National Supply Chain Office and believe that this body can serve as a critical central connector between the government and industry stakeholders noted above, as they have done during the Jasper wildfires and other recent disruptions.

### **Building capacity and partnerships**

Fortunately, the diverse disruptions and challenges of the past few years, such as the response to the pandemic and the BC floods, have also demonstrated that effective solutions can be achieved when government departments, international partners and other stakeholders work together with urgency and dedicated focus.

As noted above, the federal government has an important role in coordinating emergency management across and among different federal departments, levels of government, industry stakeholders and the public. The federal government should take the lead in bringing these stakeholders together to create partnerships and system solutions that capitalize on the expertise found within each group.

The fresh produce industry is well-versed in logistics and adapting to shifting conditions to ensure that our highly perishable and essential items reach communities across the country. This knowledge base can serve as an important resource for governments of all levels in emergency management planning.

It must also be recognized that, in addition to transportation and trade infrastructure, communities across Canada require greater investment in digital and other critical infrastructure place to support their economic development, strengthen their climate resiliency, and better enable them to realize the benefits of data-based solutions and emerging technology. The commitments made to infrastructure investment in Federal Budget 2025 should be leveraged to advance efforts to ensure that all Canadian communities and Canadian businesses have access to the critical and digital infrastructure they need.

CPMA is appreciative of the opportunity to provide comments on this important topic, which is critical to Canada's long-term food security, and for your consideration of the input above. Where possible, the Government of Canada should engage with the fresh produce industry and the broader agriculture and agri-food sector as it determines proposed policy and program models and implementation plans for the key areas noted in this submission. CPMA and Canada's fresh produce industry are keen to partner with government and would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RL', followed by a horizontal line.

Ron Lemaire  
President  
Canadian Produce Marketing Association