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Buy Canada Initiative: Strengthening Domestic Manufacturing and Protecting Canadian Origin Labelling

The proposed “Buy Canada” initiative, advanced by Prime Minister Mark Carney, is designed to strengthen Canada’s manufacturing base by encouraging governments, businesses, and consumers to prioritize goods produced in Canada with meaningful

domestic content. The initiative reflects a growing national focus on supporting local production capacity, reinforcing supply-chain resilience, and reducing reliance on imports where competitive Canadian alternatives exist. Practically, the policy promotes sourcing from Canadian manufacturers across public procurement systems and strategic industries, ensuring that purchasing decisions contribute directly to Canadian employment, skills development, and industrial investment.

A central element of the initiative is reinforcing the integrity of Canadian-origin labelling. Terms such as “Made in Canada” and the use of the Canadian flag are widely understood by consumers and institutions as indicators of genuine domestic production—not merely marketing language. These identifiers function much like protected national branding signals, helping purchasers make informed decisions about the origin of goods.



According to guidelines issued by **Competition Bureau Canada**, a “Made in Canada” claim generally requires that at least 51% of the total direct costs of manufacturing be incurred in Canada and that the last substantial transformation of the product occur domestically. When used improperly, such claims risk misleading buyers and weakening confidence in Canadian-origin labelling. Past enforcement actions demonstrate that misuse of national symbols and origin claims can result in significant regulatory penalties. As Canada strengthens enforcement against environmental misrepresentation (“greenwashing”), similar attention should be directed toward preventing misleading “Made in Canada” representations that may distort markets and undermine trust in Canadian manufacturing claims.

Consultations with individuals involved in the manufacturing and supply of textiles, clothing, and components across Canada indicate strong concern within the textile and apparel sector regarding misleading origin claims. Industry participants widely agree that some garments display Canadian flag imagery or prominent “Made in Canada” statements despite lacking sufficient Canadian manufacturing content. Such practices are viewed as unethical and potentially non-compliant, as they disadvantage legitimate domestic producers and mislead consumers about the true origin of goods.

Additional concerns have been raised regarding incorrect import classification practices and potential dumping behavior affecting the sector. It is therefore recommended that Canadian authorities investigate the improper use of national symbols and any misleading origin claims where they occur.



To address concerns regarding potential misinterpretation and misuse of Canadian origin claims in the textile and apparel sector, industry stakeholders may consider clarifying the distinction between “Made in Canada” and “Product of Canada,” strengthening guidance on the appropriate use of Canadian flag imagery, and improving transparency regarding the origin of imported components—particularly textiles. These measures would protect consumers, ensure a level playing field for domestic manufacturers, and reinforce the objectives of the Buy Canada initiative by strengthening confidence in Canadian-origin labelling and the credibility of Canada’s manufacturing identity.

Supporters of the Buy Canada initiative emphasize that stronger enforcement of origin-labelling standards, clearer definitions of Canadian content, and increased preference for domestic production in procurement policies can help protect Canadian manufacturers and bolster national economic resilience. By encouraging the purchase of goods **Made in Canada**—and, where possible, the stronger designation **Product of Canada**—and by reducing dependence on imported substitutes where domestic capability exists, the initiative aims to reinforce trust in Canadian products, support local employment, and protect the long-term credibility of Canada’s manufacturing identity.

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