

Municipalities buy Canadian in face of U.S. tariffs

By Mark PavilonsEditorLocal JournalismInitiative Reporter

The on-again, off-again trade war with the U.S. has taken another turn. Last week, U.S. President Donald Trump exempted certain imports from Canada that comply with the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) primarily auto components will avoid the 25 per cent tariffs for a month. The American stance softened in light of a downturn in the U.S. market after the initial tariffs were imposed. On April 2, Trump plans to announce what he calls reciprocal tariffs to match the tariffs, taxes and subsidies from other countries. But Canada, and the Province, are steadfast in their stance. Premier Ford noted we're going to stand firm, and Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly said they don't want to go through this psychodrama every 30 days so. Municipalities across the GTA and beyond are joining the country's opposition to the tariffs and many are changing their buying policies and supporting local businesses. King Mayor Steve Pellegrini said the tariffs and counter-tariffs is concerning to residents and business across the country. As a small and tight-knit community, King Township is committed to supporting local businesses and I encourage everyone to Buy Canadian-Shop Local' whenever possible. These tariffs threaten over 1,400 entrepreneurs and businesses located in King including a number of sectors such as manufacturing, automotive, and agriculture, to name a few and the Township stands united with our provincial and federal partners in defending Canada's economy. As the situation evolves, our Economic Development team is reaching out to local employers to assess the impact that these tariffs will have on supply chains and employment. King has implemented a new Economic Development Consultation service to best equip local businesses with information on export programs, research, support organizations or funding opportunities. For more information or to book a meeting with King's Economic Development Officer, visit king.ca/BusinessAndTariffSupport. The Economic Development team continues to collaborate with the King Chamber of Commerce to navigate these challenges and support the local business community. The mayor noted that Township staff are exploring procurement strategies that prioritize Canadian businesses and working closely with our colleagues across York Region on advocacy initiatives and countermeasures. Now more than ever, I encourage residents to shop local as well as to look for a Made in Canada' sign on your everyday purchases. Let's do our best to support Canadian companies and protect our businesses and jobs, he said. The King Chamber of Commerce is reiterating the shop local message. Now is the time to prioritize and champion our Canadian businesses, said Chamber President Michelle Frauley. We understand these changes can create challenges for small and more significant enterprises in King Township. Therefore, our organization is actively collaborating with Mayor Steve Pellegrini and King Township to ensure robust support systems for all businesses during this critical time. We believe that by working together, we can help mitigate the impact of these tariffs and encourage our community to focus on local resources and services. At King Chamber, you can reach out to Mercedes Lato, Manager Member Services, info@kingchamber.ca. In addition to our local efforts, we are contacting our provincial and federal partners and coordinating with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and York Region. By advocating for policies that nurture our local commerce, we aim to create a more favorable environment for our businesses to thrive. Together, we can reinforce the strength of our economy and ensure a prosperous future for King Township. Vaughan became the first municipality in Ontario to ratify a policy that bans U.S. suppliers. On March 4, they unanimously approved City staff's procurement strategy to prioritize Canadian goods and services at a Special Council Meeting that bans U.S. suppliers from bidding on municipal contracts. This report also authorizes the mayor to direct staff to explore additional measures, as necessary, to ensure swift response in the future. I am committed to doing everything in my power to stand up for Vaughan businesses and to safeguard our city's economic future, said Mayor Steven Del Duca. Nearby Aurora has decided to ban U.S. companies from their procurement. Mayor Tom Mrakas said the tariffs amount to an attack that threatens jobs, businesses, and industries across the country. Aurora will not stand idly by as our workers, residents and local economy are put at risk. Aurora Town Council took proactive action by amending our Procurement Bylaw to establish a Canada First policy. Now, heeding the calls of Premier Ford, the Town of Aurora is taking the next step and has banned U.S.-based companies from bidding on municipal contracts, ensuring that taxpayer dollars support Canadian industries, workers, and communities. Aurora stands with our provincial and federal partners in defending Canada's economy. I encourage all 444 municipalities across Ontario to take similar action to protect Canadian jobs, businesses, and longterm prosperity, Mrakas said. In Caledon, they launched an internal Tariff Task Force to monitor and address local business impacts through outreach, support programs, and advocacy. I recognize that this is a difficult time for our country and especially our local businesses. I want to assure you that we remain committed to working with our

local businesses to ensure they have the supports they need," says Mayor Annette Groves. "As a first step, I urge all our local businesses to connect with staff and use the Tariff Resource Hub. I also encourage residents and businesses to buy local and choose Canadian-made products, where possible, to help bolster our local economy." The task force builds on the Town's existing tariff response and will work closely with government and industry partners to align Caledon's efforts with provincial and federal support programs. "The establishment of a Tariff Task Force is a crucial step in addressing these challenges. By ensuring a coordinated response across departments, we can implement supportive programs, and advocate for the resilience of our economy," said Nathan Hyde, CAO. Caledon will continue to provide regular updates on tariff news and business support programs on its Tariff Resource Hub. Businesses and residents are encouraged to stay informed, participate in the Tariff Business Impact Survey, and reach out to Economic Development staff for one-on-one support.