



CANADA AS A MARITIME STATE

Is Canada a maritime state? Yes, most definitely. And this is true even though the vast majority of Canadians live many kilometres away from the three oceans that border their country.

The oceans are essential for Canada's economic wellbeing and for the goods we need for our homes and offices. Canada is a trading state. Canada's major container ports – Vancouver, Prince Rupert, Montreal, Halifax – handled 3.2 million 20-foot equivalent units (TEUs) in 2017.¹ Those units were loaded on to trains or trucks and then made their journey inland. You may not see the ships, but container ships brought most of the goods you purchase in clothing stores, department stores, furniture stores and some food stores.

Exports of goods and services represents 30.9% of Canada's Gross Domestic Product.² These days with the ongoing NAFTA negotiations in the news, Canadians think of trade only in terms of the United States (and perhaps Mexico). In a large part this is true – the United States is by far Canada's largest trading partner, taking almost 75% of our exports. But after the United States, the other nine countries in the top 10 recipients of Canadian exports involve ocean transport (with the possible exception of Mexico). The top 10 destinations for Canada's exports are:

1. United States
2. China
3. United Kingdom
4. Japan
5. Mexico
6. South Korea
7. India
8. Germany
9. Belgium
10. France.³

The same is true for imports. Once again, the United States is the top source of Canadian imports, but the other nine (again with the possible exception of Mexico) all involve ocean travel. The sources for imports are: 2. China; 3. Mexico; 4. Germany; 5. Japan; 6. United Kingdom; 7. South Korea; 8. Italy; 9. France; and 10. Taiwan.⁴

As the NAFTA negotiations drag on, Canada is actively seeking new trade partners and is in the process of implementing trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific trade agreements. The Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) are the most recent initiatives to secure preferred access to foreign markets for Canadian goods, services and investment.

Where did the gas you put in your car, or the natural gas that heats your house come from? Much of the energy products consumed in Canada is either Canadian-sourced or comes from the United States, but almost one-third is imported and arrives via tankers. According to the National Energy Board, OPEC supplied just under 33% Canada's oil in 2016 – from countries including Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates.⁵

The oceans are not just a trade corridor. They also provide products and employment. Canada exports a significant proportion of ocean catches caught off its shores – like lobsters, scallops, shrimp, crab and salmon. The total value of fish and seafood exports in 2017 was \$6,864,988,000.⁶

Fish are not the only products Canadians get from the oceans. The oil and gas industry in Canada has been involved in offshore exploration and development since 1959 with exploration of Sable Island. The first commercial production of oil offshore began in 1992 offshore of Nova Scotia. In November 1997, production started at the Hibernia oil field off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. The offshore oil and gas industry has grown over the past decades as technology made it possible to exploit it. Atlantic Canada produces more than 220,000 barrels of oil per day and 0.1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas per day, representing 5% of Canada's total crude oil production and 1% of Canada's overall natural gas production.⁷ The offshore energy industry employs thousands of Canadians and provides royalties to provincial governments.

Canada trades. And the trade travels by sea. How else is Canada a maritime state? The marine sector generated over \$3.1 billion in sales revenues and 11,100 direct full-time employment attributable to 314 businesses in 2014.⁸ Many Canadians are employed in the ocean fishing industry. In 2017, the number of Canadians employed as commercial fish harvesters and crew was 44,342, and in seafood product preparation and packaging the number was 28,718.⁹

The cruise ship industry brings hundreds of thousands of tourists to Canada every year. They come and visit and spend money, providing money to local businesses and jobs. Vancouver, for example, receives thousands of visitors via cruise ships – in 2017, close to 843,000 visitors were recorded coming through on 236 ships.¹⁰ In Halifax, from April to October 2017, there were 179 vessel calls carrying approximately 275,000 passengers.¹¹

Canada thinks of itself as a caring international actor. What happens when natural disasters occur – Canada responds. Most of the time that response goes via the oceans. Air transport is expensive and while quick, requires significant working local infrastructure – unlike ships, especially naval ships. Naval ships can carry significant amounts of disaster relief cargo and can deliver them ashore via ship-to-shore connections inherent in the ships.

With the exception of indigenous Canadians who, it is believed, came here long ago via land bridges, many Canadians arrived in the country by ships – coming from a wide variety of homelands. The historic Pier 21 in Halifax is where many people arrived on their journey across the ocean.

We forget the oceans at our peril. Canada's motto is *a mari usque ad mare* – from sea to sea. There are three oceans on Canada's borders, the Atlantic Ocean, the Arctic Ocean and the Pacific

Ocean. But now many of us have lost our connection with the oceans, and since we don't see it, we assume it has no relevance to our lives. We see trains and trucks carrying goods to our department stores, but we don't realize that those containers were unloaded from container ships before they were loaded on to trains or trucks.

The oceans have had and continue to have a huge effect on Canada – from our roots in other countries to our goods sold abroad or bought from abroad, to jobs, food, energy and recreation. Canada is a maritime state.

Notes

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4. Global Affairs Canada, “Annual Merchandise Trade: Canada’s Merchandise Imports,” 2017, available at http://www.international.gc.ca/economist-economiste/statistics-statistiques/annual_merchandise_trade-commerce_des_marchandises_annuel.aspx?lang=eng.
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11. “2017 Cruise Ship Season,” My Waterfront, Halifax, 26 January 2017, available at <https://my-waterfront.ca/2017/01/26/2017-cruise-ship-season-announced/>.