

Trump tariffs**Donald Trump to cut Canadian tariffs after pressure from Republicans**

President to ease some levies to help candidates facing tough US Senate election battles



Maine senator Susan Collins says the Canadian goods getting relief from levies are 'a vital part' of the US state's economy © AP Photo/Robert F Bukaty

Aime Williams in Washington and **Ilya Gridneff** in Toronto

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Donald Trump will slash tariffs on a range of Canadian goods linked to agriculture and forestry, following a campaign by Republicans facing tough midterm election battles.

Tariffs of 50 per cent on products that are critical for US states' agricultural industries will be eliminated, including on different types of machinery, and wrapping, packaging and plastic crates, in an attempt to alleviate pressures on US states whose economies are closely intertwined with Canada's.

The move comes as Republicans in tight midterm Senate races — including Maine, Michigan and New Hampshire — have taken to attacking the president's trade wars as they try to distance themselves from the broader affordability crisis harming their election chances.

Senator Susan Collins, a five-term Republican senator who is fighting for political survival in Maine, said the Canadian goods getting relief from levies were “a vital part” of Maine’s economy.

“Many of our farmers and growers rely on specialised equipment, packaging materials and other products from Canada that are either unavailable from American suppliers or cannot be replaced without incurring significant expense,” she said in a statement outlining the tariff relief.

Although she is one of a handful of Republican lawmakers to have publicly criticised Trump’s duties, the levies — a flagship part of Trump’s economic policy — have become a political liability in her home state.

Polls show Americans are deeply anxious about inflation and the cost of living less than two weeks before the midterm elections, with tariffs an unpopular part of Trump’s economic policy.

Mike Rogers, the Republican Senate candidate in Michigan, has also been campaigning against the president’s tariffs, running campaign advertisements opposing duties on Canadian goods.

In New Hampshire, US Senate candidate John Sununu has repeatedly criticised the president’s trade wars and said Congress should “take back some power”.

In a factsheet released on Friday, the White House said it would instead add tariffs to other Canadian goods, including valves, carpets and waste products. The changes will take effect from October 30.

Derek Nighbor, president of the Forest Products Association of Canada, said removing a limited number of forest products from a tariff list does not fix the bigger problem.

He said: “Canadian lumber, furniture, kitchen cabinetry and other wood products remain caught up in a growing web of US duties and tariffs that increase costs for American consumers and create uncertainty for businesses and workers on both sides of the border.

“We are reviewing the latest additions to understand their full impact, but the broader problem is clear: North America’s integrated economy needs stable, rules-based trade, not constantly changing tariffs.”

Canada has found itself in Trump's crosshairs as he has waged a global trade war during his second administration, often threatening huge tariffs on the US's northern neighbour and railing against its leadership in Ottawa.

In July, Trump announced he would hit Canada with fresh duties of 50 per cent on a limited list of goods over what Washington said were unfair trade practices. The administration based the tariffs on Section 338 of the Tariff Act of 1930, which has never been used to impose duties on trading partners.

Trump earlier imposed national security tariffs of 50 per cent on steel and aluminium imported from most of the US's trading partners.

"Tariff relief is welcome, but farmers need lasting certainty," the Canadian Federation of Agriculture said. "Removing all recently imposed tariffs and retaliatory measures affecting agriculture would support farmers on both sides of the border and help keep food affordable."

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