

Local Manufacturers Share Tariff and Trade Challenges at Aurora Business Roundtable

Aurora, ON – October 15, 2026 – The Aurora Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Central York Chamber of Commerce, brought together local manufacturers, government representatives and industry experts on Tuesday, October 13, for a timely discussion on the challenges facing Canada's manufacturing sector.

The roundtable welcomed MP Sandra Cobena, MP Shuvaloy Majumdar, Eddie Bissoon (FedDev), Chelsea Rubin (Osler Law) and Michael Di Girolamo (BDC) for a candid conversation about tariffs, trade uncertainty, access to funding and the growing pressures affecting local businesses.

The discussion provided manufacturers with an opportunity to share firsthand experiences, raise concerns directly with government representatives and learn about available financial and legal resources to help navigate an increasingly complex trade environment.

Manufacturers Facing Mounting Pressures

Throughout the discussion, local manufacturers highlighted the significant impact of U.S. tariffs and Canadian counter-tariffs on their operations. Participants described rising costs, disrupted supply chains, tightening cash flow and ongoing uncertainty that is delaying investment, hiring and expansion decisions.

Some businesses reported facing tariffs on both sides of the border, creating a combined burden of up to 100% on certain goods. Others expressed concerns about the long-term competitiveness of Canadian manufacturing, including the cost of equipment, regulatory barriers and the possibility of relocating operations to the United States.

For smaller manufacturers in particular, these pressures present significant challenges to maintaining operations while planning for future growth.

Financial Support and Business Resources

Representatives discussed financial assistance available through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) and the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC).

Programs highlighted during the discussion included:

- **FedDev Ontario:** Liquidity support of up to \$2 million in non-repayable funding for eligible tariff-impacted businesses, along with potential funding of up to \$1 million for projects focused on growth, diversification and reshoring.

- **BDC:** Pivot to Grow financing ranging from \$250,000 to \$5 million for eligible Canadian exporters, with expanded eligibility intended to make financing more accessible to small and medium-sized businesses.

Participants were encouraged to explore available funding opportunities and connect directly with program representatives to discuss eligibility and application requirements.

The discussion also explored legal avenues for tariff relief, including standing remissions, specific remission applications, duty drawback programs and commercial negotiations. While these mechanisms may offer financial relief, participants heard that certain application processes can be lengthy and administratively challenging.

Bringing the Voice of Business to Government

A central objective of the roundtable was to ensure that the experiences of local manufacturers are heard by elected officials and reflected in ongoing policy discussions.

MP Shuv Majumdar discussed the importance of strengthening Canada's domestic manufacturing capacity, improving regulatory competitiveness and reducing economic vulnerabilities. He encouraged manufacturers to share specific examples of tariff-related challenges, including affected products and counter-tariff classifications, and committed to raising these concerns through federal advocacy efforts.

MP Sandra Cobena also discussed opportunities to address regulatory barriers and expressed interest in hearing directly from manufacturers as part of discussions surrounding red tape reduction.

Participants emphasized the need for greater clarity around trade policy, more timely access to financial relief and practical measures that help Canadian businesses remain competitive.

Continuing the Conversation

The roundtable reinforced the importance of direct dialogue between businesses, government representatives and organizations providing financial and advisory support.

Several follow-up opportunities were identified, including connecting manufacturers with FedDev Ontario and BDC representatives, gathering specific examples of tariff and remission challenges, and identifying businesses interested in contributing to discussions on regulatory reform.

For the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, these conversations are an important part of ensuring that advocacy efforts reflect the realities facing local businesses.

“Manufacturers are navigating an incredibly challenging environment, and the impacts of tariffs and trade uncertainty are being felt right here in our community,” said Alison Mumford, Executive Director of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. “Our role is to bring businesses together, listen to their concerns and help connect them with the people, resources and decision-makers who can make a difference. These conversations are essential to ensuring the needs of our local business community are heard.”

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce will continue working with its regional partners, government representatives and business community to identify emerging challenges, share relevant resources and advocate for policies that support local business growth and economic resilience.

Businesses experiencing tariff-related challenges or seeking additional information on available support programs are encouraged to contact the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.