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Federal government must remove uncertainty with release of Bill C-69 project list

Garth Whyte, Fertilizer Canada

In a global marketplace, where capital knows no borders, Canada's ability to compete for investment is critical to our economic health and prosperity. Canada needs to ensure industries – such as fertilizer – remain internationally viable. The Canadian fertilizer industry is the world's largest exporter of fertilizer, supplying farmers in Canada and abroad. We must continue to attract investment and maintain our place as a worldwide industry leader.

This is in part why Nutrien's President & CEO Chuck Magro recently became co-chair of the Business Council of Canada's Task Force on Canada's Economic Future. "One of our biggest concerns is how Canada stacks up against the growing number of countries that vie with us for talent, investment, and innovation," Magro wrote in recent article. "In a recent survey of the leaders of Canada's top 150 companies – enterprises that employ two million Canadians and positively impact the lives of millions more – 90 per cent said they were concerned or very concerned with the competitiveness of Canada's business environment."

The Impact Assessment Act, or Bill C-69, is one such concern. The federal government initiated a review of the environmental assessment process as part of their commitment to deliver a sustainable, safe and responsible process that ensures good projects go ahead and get resources to market. As currently proposed, Bill C-69 will increase uncertainty, cost and time for new projects.

While federal legislation might be necessary for cross-jurisdiction projects with significant environmental impacts, the relatively low environmental footprint of the fertilizer industry has always been well-regulated by existing legislation within the provinces, like Saskatchewan.

Projects subject to the Impact Assessment Act are identified on a project list, which remains unreleased. This has created uncertainty for the potash, nitrogen and similar industries who have been operating under provincial jurisdiction. The federal government must remove uncertainty that threatens competitiveness by releasing the project list to assist stakeholders in determining the impacts of Bill C-69 on their current or future businesses.



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Confirming the fertilizer sector and other similar sectors remain unaffected by releasing the project list would signal to Canadian businesses that the federal government respects and understands the importance of creating certainty as a measure to safeguard and improve the competitiveness of our country – critical for fostering healthy investment and growth.

Members of the Canadian fertilizer industry will be speaking at a Senate committee hearing in Saskatoon today to express concern over the uncertainty surrounding Bill C-69.