



March 12, 2025

Hon. Dominic Leblanc, PC, MP
Minister of Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs
Department of Finance Canada
90 Elgin Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G5

By email: minister-ministre@fin.gc.ca

Subject: U.S. Tariff Consultations and Gluten-Free Food Affordability

Dear Minister Leblanc,

I am writing on behalf of Celiac Canada, a federally registered charity committed to ensuring that every person living in Canada with celiac disease is diagnosed and empowered. We are asking the federal government to support Canadians with celiac disease by exempting gluten-free foods from any tariffs to help manage the high cost of these medically necessary products.

Celiac disease is a serious autoimmune disorder that affects 1% of Canadians. Ingesting gluten triggers a reaction that damages the small intestine, impairing the body's ability to absorb nutrients. This damage can lead to complications such as gastrointestinal issues, anemia, infertility, chronic fatigue, neurological damage, osteoporosis, and even certain cancers.

For Canadians with celiac disease, gluten-free food is the only available treatment to manage and prevent these complications. Gluten is found in wheat, barley, rye, triticale, and their hybrids. As a result, most packaged foods must be specially formulated and clearly labelled 'gluten-free' for consumers to purchase safely. Even before any potential tariffs, gluten-free foods already cost significantly more than their gluten-containing counterparts. Consider these examples:

- A gluten-free soft white loaf of bread costs \$7.97 for a 480g loaf (\$1.66/100g), compared to \$1.97 for a 675g loaf (\$0.29/100g) – **a 572% price increase per gram.**
- Gluten-free pasta costs \$3.97 for 250g (\$1.59/100g), compared to \$3.97 for 500g (\$0.79/100g) – **a 201% increase per gram.**
- Gluten-free flour costs \$7.47 for a 907g bag (\$0.82/100g), compared to \$5.97 for 2.5kg (\$0.24/100g) – **a 341% increase per gram.**
- International studies have indicated that the cost of a gluten-free diet can be as much as **518% higher** than a gluten-containing diet in some areas.

The **2022 State of Celiac Disease in Canada** health survey, which included 7,500 Canadians, revealed that 75% reported the gluten-free diet as expensive, with 52% indicating this has limited their ability to purchase sufficient food.

For those with celiac disease, substituting gluten-free foods with gluten-containing alternatives is not an option. Limited domestic capacity for safe gluten-free manufacturing, combined with the



need for imported gluten-free ingredients, means Canadian gluten-free products cannot always replace imported ones.

Celiac Canada is deeply concerned that adding tariffs will further inflate the already high costs of gluten-free foods. This may force Canadians with celiac disease to make difficult decisions: absorbing the increased costs, risking their health by choosing unsafe foods, or going hungry — especially during a period of ongoing food price inflation.

We urge the federal government to protect the health and well-being of Canadians with celiac disease by exempting gluten-free foods from any tariffs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melissa Secord'.

Melissa Secord, CAE
National Executive Director, Celiac Canada

Cc:
Minister of Health
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health
Sonia Sidhu, MP