

Canada – US Client Update

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Introduction

Dentons' **Government Affairs and Public Policy** group is pleased to provide this periodic briefing on developments in Washington that impact Canada/US relations. We are tracking the following issues for our clients and are happy to modify the updates as needed in future editions.

To begin, we are focused on the major topics of trade and tax policy. We also focus on energy and environmental issues, border management and infrastructure. To round out the list, we add agriculture and financial services updates.

Before we dive into those issues, we present the larger context of the news that is dominating headlines and attention in Washington.

The larger context - healthcare and Russia

Over the last few weeks, Washington, D.C. has been dominated by two issues: healthcare and ties between the Trump campaign and Russia.

On health care, House Republican Leadership released the American Health Care Act, which would partially repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, commonly referred to as ObamaCare. Last week, the House Ways and Means Committee, and the House Energy and Commerce Committee held marathon mark-ups approving the American Health Care Act. On March 16, 2016, the House Budget Committee also approved the American Health Care Act. Congressional Republican leadership is hoping to send a health care bill to President Trump before the Easter congressional recess, a tight deadline particularly taking into account the lack of consensus among their own members on the substance of repealing and replacing ObamaCare.

On Russia, President Trump alleged, without providing evidence, that President Obama wiretapped Trump Towers during the campaign. Trump's claim was made after new revelations surfaced of contacts last year between the Trump campaign and Russia. Attorney General Jeff Sessions recused himself from any Department of Justice investigation of potential Russian interference in the US Presidential election after the *Washington Post* reported that Sessions had met twice last year with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak. Democrats, along with a couple of Congressional Republicans, are also now calling for a special prosecutor to probe Russian interference.

Now, let's dive into Canada/US issues.

Overview of the state of trade policy, with special focus on the NAFTA

It is axiomatic at this point to observe that over the year, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has worked well for all three parties—Canada, the US and Mexico—but this fact did not seem to matter in the recent US elections. The politics in the US have shifted since the agreement was first introduced. The Trump Administration campaigned against trade agreements, targeting the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement and the NAFTA as terrible deals for the US due to loss of manufacturing jobs.

As a candidate, Mr. Trump pledged to renegotiate the NAFTA or leave it. It does not appear that Canada was ever his concern; the focus was on US jobs and plants moving south of the US border. Both Canada

and Mexico have said that they are willing to negotiate. A very smooth early Trump-Trudeau summit paved the way for further consultations on what might be changed in the NAFTA. The US-Mexico summit was cancelled by Mexico in reaction to Mr. Trump's demands.

It is not clear what the Administration had in mind specifically in a renegotiation. Administration strategists talk in terms of economic nationalism, a definitive preference for bilateral rather than multi-party agreements, and that trade should be in balance between the US and each major country with which it trades. Cross-border trade between Canada and the US is nearly US\$2 billion per day and close to being balanced, but Mexico runs a US\$60 billion annual surplus with the US.

All three parties would agree that NAFTA, which was negotiated 23 years ago, could use updating. E-commerce hardly existed then. The easiest source for an update would be to draw on the 30 chapters of TPP. All three NAFTA partners signed the agreement. Besides addressing rules for the digital economy, other provisions could lead to closer cooperation and coordination on regulations that affect North/South trade. In terms of specific market access, once negotiations commence, domestic consultations will create a wish list for each of the three countries' negotiators to address in meetings. Canada will want access to US federal procurement that flows down to the state and local levels. This could amount to a very sizeable increase in exports for Canada, especially if there is a major US infrastructure program. Canada would also desire to see state and local public procurement in the US more open even when federal dollars are not involved. There will also be an opportunity to cover cross-border trade in services in any new agreement.

The overall shape of the negotiation is not yet determined. It could become two bilateral negotiations that result in separate US agreements—one with Mexico and another with Canada. If the NAFTA simply were terminated, the legal effect would be that the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement could be revived, as it was only suspended to get the NAFTA in place. If that did not happen, Canada and the US would treat each other the same way each treats countries with which it does not have free trade agreements—imposing higher tariffs. Both economies would be disrupted by this increase, given current economic integration.

US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross has been designated to lead the US side of NAFTA talks with Canada. However, the Commerce Department still has no political appointees to carry out the negotiations. The US government first needs to staff up. This is true at the State, Treasury and the US Trade Representative's offices as well. It would be hard for the US to field a negotiating team now that would have the confidence of the White House, and even harder to formulate negotiating objectives. In addition, under applicable US law, at least a 90-day notice has to be given to Congress before negotiations can begin, and the Administration would need to have some specifics to share before that could happen. For all these reasons, if the negotiations are to be very substantive—requiring any changes in US law—they cannot get underway nor conclude quickly.

As for the TPP, President Trump's first act was to withdraw the US from it (it had been signed under Mr. Obama but not ratified by Congress).

Tax reform (border adjustment)

A border adjustment tax would fundamentally change the way that imports to and from the US are taxed. As a border adjustment tax is estimated by Congressional Republican leaders to generate roughly US\$1 trillion over a 10-year period, revenue that could be used to lower both corporate and individual tax rates as part of tax reform. Many Congressional Republicans are interested in including such a tax as part of a comprehensive tax reform proposal. The proposed border adjustment tax is highly controversial and strenuously opposed by those US retailers that import many of their goods. Such retailers believe that the costs of such a tax would be passed on to consumers through higher prices that could reduce their sales.

In his first address to Congress on February 28, while indicating that he would be proposing massive tax relief for the middle class, President Trump refused to state his position on the border adjustment tax, a

central element of Speaker Paul Ryan's tax code overhaul proposal. While President Trump has made remarks since then expressing some interest in exploring a border adjustment proposal, he has not yet taken a position for or against such a proposal.

As Canada sends about 75 percent of its exports to the US, it could suffer if the proposed border adjustment tax is implemented, especially if Canadian energy exports are not exempt from the border adjustment tax. A border adjustment tax would also strengthen the US dollar and could have the effect of weakening other currencies, including the Canadian dollar.

Environmental policy

President Trump is expected to release an executive order soon instructing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to review the Clean Power Plan (CPP) and other Obama-era climate change initiatives. The CPP is the cornerstone regulatory effort of the EPA issued under the Obama Administration to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from existing power plants pursuant to the Clean Air Act. The most likely sequencing of events when the order is released involves EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt embarking on a strategy to:

- 1) Remove the EPA from the ongoing litigation over the CPP where, until now, the US government has been defending the regulation. As Attorney General of Oklahoma, prior to his EPA nomination, Administrator Pruitt led litigation efforts by several states seeking to void the CPP.
- 2) Commence a rulemaking process to reverse course seeking to either completely repeal or otherwise replace the CPP. The legal and regulatory hurdles for reversing course through a rulemaking process will be challenging based on precedent. In *Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Ass'n. v. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co.*, 463 U.S. 29 (1983), the US Supreme Court rejected an attempt by the Reagan Administration unilaterally to rescind an existing rule requiring automatic seat belts. That precedent appears to require not only notice and comment but also a rational basis in the record that will survive judicial review in order to eliminate a rule previously promulgated through notice and comment procedures.

However, the political and policy challenges of such an executive order will have significant international ramifications as well. This order will intensify an ongoing debate within the Trump Administration as to whether the US should remain a party to the United Nations Paris Agreement on climate change. Congressional Democrats and a few Congressional Republicans are also pressuring President Trump and Secretary Rex Tillerson to maintain international climate action pledges and remain an active party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. The CPP is the key domestic action pledge the Obama Administration made as part of the Paris Agreement—to significantly cut US power sector emissions from 2022 through 2030. Secretary Tillerson stated during his nomination hearing that he would like the US to “stay in the conversation” and have a “seat at the table” with respect to international negotiations; whereas President Trump's most recent statement on the subject is that he has an “open mind.”

The US stance on the Paris Agreement and international climate change received its first significant test, when Prime Minister Trudeau visited President Trump in Washington, D.C. in early February. Despite efforts by the Canadian team to get language on climate change in the Joint Communique, the final language reflected unwillingness on the part of the US to include such language. The final language does keep Canada and the US on a path of energy collaboration however, stating:

“US-Canada energy and environmental cooperation are inextricably linked, and we commit to further improving our ties in those areas. We have built the world's largest energy trading relationship. We share the goals of energy security, a robust and secure energy grid, and a strong and resilient energy infrastructure that contributes to energy efficiency in both countries. We collaborate closely on energy innovation, particularly in the clean energy sphere. As the process continues for the Keystone XL pipeline, we

remain committed to moving forward on energy infrastructure projects that will create jobs while respecting the environment. We also look forward to building on our many areas of environmental cooperation, particularly along our border and at the Great Lakes, and we will continue to work together to enhance the quality of our air and water."

Energy policy

In early March, a White House spokeswoman said that Keystone XL (KXL) is exempt from a new executive order, which requires that pipeline developers use US steel and equipment on all "new pipelines, as well as retrofitted, repaired, or expanded pipelines." The President signed the "Buy America" executive order the same day that he issued an executive order on KXL directing the State Department to make a national interest determination 60 days after TransCanada submits a new Presidential Permit application (TransCanada filed a new Presidential Permit application several days after the issuance of this executive order). According to a White House spokeswoman, KXL is exempt from the "Buy America" executive order because construction is already underway on the project. Further, the spokeswoman said that the executive order was only supposed to apply to new pipelines or existing pipelines slated for repair. In a related development, TransCanada dropped their lawsuit against the US federal government, alleging that the Obama Administration's previous rejection of KXL constituted as a violation of the NAFTA.

In addition, on March 2, the Senate confirmed former Governor Rick Perry as the next Secretary of Energy on a 62-37 vote. As Governor of Texas, Perry oversaw an unconventional oil and gas revolution spurred by hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling, along with a significant expansion in renewable energy generation. As Secretary of Energy, it remains to be seen how key of a role Perry will play in shaping the Trump Administration's energy and environmental policies given EPA's environmental jurisdiction and Interior's management of energy development on federal and Native American lands. Perry's predecessor, Ernie Moniz, was an influential player in President Obama's second term, helping to shape the Administration's Climate Action Plan.

Moniz also engaged in substantial outreach to the Canadian Natural Resources and the Mexican Energy Secretary and indicated that the North American energy ministers should meet at least once a year. Moreover, the second installment of the Quadrennial Energy Review included an entire section devoted to North American coordination, recommending that the three countries advance collective grid security and modernize international cross-border transmission permitting. It is unclear whether Perry will continue this level of outreach to his counterparts in Canada and Mexico.

Infrastructure

On the campaign trail, President Trump promised that the US would create jobs under his Administration, including through infrastructure projects. President Trump repeated his intention in his first address to a joint session of Congress on February 28, saying he will ask Congress for a US \$1 trillion infrastructure bill. He has indicated that repairing roads and bridges across the country is one way to direct funding; however, specifics about how the US\$1 trillion will be spent and where the money will come from have yet to be presented.

The Republican Congress is not likely to provide that kind of funding without offsetting the cost, creating a divide between aspirations and reality. Many Republican and Democratic members of Congress embrace the suggestion of creating jobs through infrastructure projects; however the funding of that activity will be the sticking point.

As soon as the healthcare debate, tax reform debate and debt ceiling negotiations are through, we will have a clearer view of the kind of money available for infrastructure projects. These may be resolved by the end of 2017 or into early 2018. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill

Shuster (R-PA) recently stated that he would like to advance infrastructure legislation in late summer or early fall 2017.

On a related note, the Canadian American Business Council will be holds its annual DC policy forum on March 29, 2017 at the Newseum. This year's theme—Infrastructure Modernization: A US-Canada Conversation—featured remarks from House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster, Representative John Delaney (D-MD), Canadian Minister of Infrastructure Amarjeet Sohi, Building America's Future President Marcia Hale, Competitive Enterprise Institute Senior Fellow Marc Scribner, and AFL-CIO Transportation Trades President Ed Wytkind.

Border security

In their joint statement, Prime Minister Trudeau and President Trump recognized the success of current preclearance programs, and committed to expanding those programs and initiatives to support expedited cross-border trade and travel, to include collaborative work in finding solutions for labor mobility challenges in various sectors, as well as cargo preclearance. The US version of preclearance legislation was passed by Congress at the end of December, and the Canadian House of Commons has had a second reading of the Canadian version of the law, Bill C-23, that would bring into effect the Canada-US Pre-clearance Agreement signed by President Obama and Prime Minister Harper. Some New Democratic Party members of Parliament have expressed concerns that the bill doesn't take into account what they called the "climate of uncertainty" at the border, created by the Trump Administration's recently adopted immigration policies.

Agriculture

Former Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue was the last cabinet nominee announced by President Trump and it appears he will be the last nominee to officially join the Trump Cabinet. Despite almost two months since the announcement that Perdue had been selected, his nomination has not yet been transmitted to the Senate Agriculture Committee for review, according to a committee staffer we talked with earlier in March. The FBI and the Office of Government Ethics has not yet cleared the Perdue paperwork to go to the Senate. The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee would like to hold a hearing on Perdue before the end of March and approve his nomination for full Senate action prior to the April Easter Congressional recess. It is believed that Perdue will receive strong bipartisan support in the Senate once his confirmation process begins.

Financial services

On March 1, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin met in Washington with Canada's Minister of Finance Bill Morneau. According to the Treasury Department's readout of the meeting, they discussed the importance of economic growth, the trade relationship between the US and Canada, and strong collaboration on combating the financing of terrorism and other illicit economic activity. Secretary Mnuchin said he looked forward to working with Minister Morneau in the G7 and G20 to advance common priorities to increase strong, sustained, and balanced global growth. The meeting came one day after President Trump's speech to Congress in which he promised "massive tax relief" without elaborating on what such relief would consist of.

Minister Morneau was Secretary Mnuchin's first foreign visitor since taking office.

Key players - Trade

Administration

Gary Cohn, Director, National Economic Council

- “No one wants to see a trade war, but we do want to see as the President said, we want to see a free and fair trade policy,” he said, noting that the Trump administration understands the importance of trade to the economy, but it must be conducted in a fair and level playing field.” Gary recently met with Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray on NAFTA negotiations.

Wilbur Ross, Secretary, Department of Commerce

- During his confirmation hearing, Ross testified that a NAFTA renegotiation will be one of his top initial priorities. Ross recently stated that “real” negotiations on NAFTA will likely not occur until later this year.

Robert Lighthizer, US Trade Representative nominee

- Senate Finance Committee is holding a confirmation hearing on March 14 for Lighthizer.

Peter Navarro, Director, National Trade Council

- Navarro, an academic who has criticized NAFTA and other trade deals, will lead the newly created NTC.

Congress

Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Chairman, Senate Finance Committee

- As Chair of Senate Finance Committee, Hatch maintains jurisdiction over US trade policy. Hatch recently stated that revamping NAFTA “makes sense,” but praised the trade pact serving as a “strong anchor” for markets.

Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR), Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee

- Wyden recently said that NAFTA needs an “upgrade.”

Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX), Chairman, House Ways & Means Committee

- As Chair, Brady maintains jurisdiction over trade policy and on NAFTA, Brady told the President to “keep what works for America”.

Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA), Ranking Member, House Ways & Means Committee

- After meeting with the President, Neal urged US trade negotiators to “insist that Mexico end the abusive labor and environmental practices that have put the United States at a competitive disadvantage, cost American workers their jobs, and reduced their paychecks.”

Key players - Taxes

Administration

Steven Mnuchin, Secretary, Department of the Treasury

- Mnuchin is expected to play a leading role in drafting the President's tax plan, which he hopes Congress will pass by August.
- Mnuchin has expressed skepticism about the merits of a border adjustment tax.

Steve Bannon, Senior Counselor to the President

- Bannon is seen as one of the more vocal supporters of the border adjustment tax in the White House.

Congress

Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Chairman, Senate Finance Committee

- Hatch has expressed skepticism about the border adjustment tax.

Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR), Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee

- Wyden called the border adjustment tax proposal a "gut punch to working families already struggling to get by".

Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX), Chairman, House Ways & Means Committee

- As Chairman of the House Ways & Means Committee, Brady has jurisdiction over tax reform.
- Brady's tax reform blueprint relies in large part on a border adjustment tax to offset the costs of substantial cuts to individual and corporate rates.

Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA), Ranking Member, House Ways & Means Committee

- Regarding a border adjustment tax, Neal recently stated that Congress "must be mindful of not touching off a trade war".

Key players - Climate change

Administration

Rex Tillerson, Secretary, Department of State

- Tillerson is reportedly lobbying the President to remain part of the Paris Agreement on climate change; as Exxon CEO, Tillerson supported the Paris Agreement.
- Tillerson recently recused himself from the Department's review of the Presidential Permit for the KXL pipeline.

Steve Bannon, Senior Counselor to the President

- Bannon is a strong advocate for the Administration withdrawing from the Paris Agreement.

Congress

Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY), Chairman, Senate Environment & Public Works Committee

- Barrasso may consider legislation to reform federal environmental statutes.
- Barrasso, who is also a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has argued that the Paris Agreement constitutes a treaty and should be submitted to the Senate for ratification.

Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE), Ranking Member, Senate Environment & Public Works Committee

- As Ranking Member, Carper is likely to strongly criticize the Administration's rollback on Obama-era climate change policies.

Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN), Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

- Corker has noted that the Paris Agreement does not impose binding requirements on the US and counseled restraint against withdrawing from the climate change pact.

Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD), Ranking Member, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

- Cardin emphasized the importance of the Paris Agreement in Tillerson's confirmation hearings.

Key players - Energy

Administration

Scott Pruitt, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency

- Pruitt recently stated that human activity is not the primary driver of climate change.
- Pruitt is expected to roll back many of the Obama-era climate regulations, including the Clean Power Plan.

Rick Perry, Secretary, Department of Energy

- It is unclear whether Perry will continue regular engagement with Canada and Mexico's energy ministers.
- Perry is expected to expedite DOE's review of LNG export applications.

Congress

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Chairwoman, Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee

- Murkowski would like to develop an energy title to an infrastructure bill.

Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Ranking Member, Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee

- In the last Congress, Cantwell worked with Murkowski on a bipartisan energy bill. Cantwell, however, faces reelection in 2018, and potential Democratic primary challengers, so it is unclear if she will work with Murkowski on another large energy bill.

Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI), Chairman, House Energy Subcommittee

- Upton has previously authored legislation on reforming the Presidential Permit process for cross-border energy infrastructure.
- Upton has expressed an interest in an energy title to a potential infrastructure bill and will likely play a leading role on the Republican side in drafting any such title.

Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Ranking Member, House Energy and Commerce Committee

- Pallone has stated that any infrastructure bill should include an energy title.

Key players - Infrastructure/Buy American

Administration

Gary Cohn, Director, National Economic Council

- Cohn recently convened representatives from 15 federal agencies to discuss how to further the President's infrastructure agenda.

Elaine Chao, Secretary, Department of Agriculture

- Chao recently met with US governors and mayors to discuss the President's infrastructure agenda.

Congress

Rep. Bill Shuster (R-PA), Chairman, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

- On the President's US\$1 trillion infrastructure plan, Shuster recently said that there is "not going to be a trillion dollars coming out of Washington, D.C.," and that private sector dollars will have to be spent.

Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Ranking Member, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

- In a letter to the then President-elect, DeFazio called for the new Administration to spend all of the HMT revenue on operations and maintenance at US ports.

Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY), Chair, Senate Environment & Public Works Committee

- As Chair of the EPW Committee, Barrasso will maintain jurisdiction over significant portions of an infrastructure bill.
- Barrasso has expressed skepticism that the P3 model can attract investments in rural communities.

Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE), Ranking Member, Senate Environment & Public Works Committee

- Carper has criticized the Trump Administration on its lack of outreach on the President's infrastructure plan.

Key players - Border security

Administration

John Kelly, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security

- During his visit to Canada, Kelly said that the Administration wants “as thin a border as we can create.” Moreover, Kelly stated that he is “very comfortable with the level of security” at the US-Canadian border.

Jeff Sessions, Secretary, Department of Justice

- Sessions, an early supporter of Trump, has supported tougher border and immigration measures.

Congress

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI), Chairman, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

- As Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental, Johnson maintains jurisdiction over DHS.
- Johnson recently stated that he is “concerned” that terrorists could sneak into the US from the US-Canadian border in response to Prime Minister Trudeau’s decision to allow more Syrian refugees to enter Canada.

Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO), Ranking Member, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

- McCaskill is facing a likely tough reelection contest in Nov. 2018.

Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX), Chairman, House Homeland Security Committee

- McCaul’s committee maintains jurisdiction over DHS.
- McCaul had planned to tour the US-Canadian border last year but this trip was postponed.

Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-MS), Ranking Member, House Homeland Security Committee

Key players - Financial services

Administration

Steven Mnuchin, Secretary, Department of Treasury

- Mnuchin recently met with Finance Minister Morneau where they discussed cooperation on combatting terrorism financing,

Congress

Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID), Chairman, Senate Banking Committee

- Crapo is the new Chairman of the Senate Banking Committee who is also a Co-Chair of the Canada-US Inter-Parliamentary Group.

Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Ranking Member, Senate Banking Committee

- Brown is a vocal opponent of trade deals, including NAFTA.

Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), Chairman, House Financial Services Committee

- Hensarling's committee maintains jurisdiction over finance policy, including potential reforms to the Dodd-Frank bill.

Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA), Ranking Member, House Financial Services Committee

Key players - Agriculture

Administration

Wilbur Ross, Secretary, Department of Commerce

- US calls for changes to Canada's dairy subsidies could arise in discussions on reforming NAFTA.

Sonny Perdue, Secretary nominee, US Department of Agriculture

Congress

Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS), Chairman, Senate Agriculture Committee

- Roberts opposed mandatory country-of-origin labeling.
- Roberts recently stated that Congress and the Administration "better get moving pretty quick" to help agriculture exports.

Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture Committee

- In addition to agriculture policy, Stabenow is a member of the Senate Finance Committee and, therefore, she will be weighing the potential tax and trade policy changes and their impact on the US-Canada relationship.

Rep. Michael Conaway (R-TX), Chairman, House Agriculture Committee

- Conaway has criticized "tremendous and steady rise in foreign barriers to trade" for agriculture exports.

Rep. Collin Peterson (D-MN), Ranking Member, House Agriculture Committee

Contributors

Canada



James Moore
Sr. Business Advisor, Vancouver
T +1 604 691 6418
james.moore@dentons.com

US



Maryscott (Scotty) Greenwood
Principal, Washington, DC
T +1 202 496 7157
maryscott.greenwood@dentons.com



Andrew Shaw
Sr. Managing Associate, Washington, DC
T +1 202 496 7116
andrew.shaw@dentons.com

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