

Canada launches safeguard inquiry on frozen and canned vegetable imports, announces potential inquiry on wood furniture and flooring

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Key Takeaways

- The Canadian International Trade Tribunal has commenced a safeguard inquiry into imports of frozen or canned vegetable goods. If the Tribunal finds that there is a surge of imports causing or threatening to cause serious injury to the Canadian domestic industry, Canada may impose tariffs or quota-based restrictions on imports that may affect supply chains and sourcing considerations for Canadian businesses.
- Parties wishing to participate in the inquiry proceedings must file [notices](#) with the CITT by April 2.
- The Minister of Finance has also announced an impending safeguard inquiry into wood cabinets and vanities, hardwood flooring and engineered wood storage furniture which could similarly result in tariffs or quota-based restrictions on imports.

On March 16, 2026, the Canadian International Trade Tribunal (Tribunal) [commenced](#) a safeguard inquiry into imports of the following frozen or canned vegetable goods:

- corn
- peas
- green beans
- wax beans
- mixes of peas and carrots
- mixed vegetables
- white, black, red or pinto beans
- chickpeas

If the Tribunal finds that there was a surge of imports that are causing or threatening to cause serious injury to Canadian producers of like or competitive goods, the Government of Canada (Canada) is permitted to impose safeguard measures including tariffs (i.e., surtaxes),

import quotas (limits on volumes that can be imported) or tariff-rate quotas (zero or low duty rate imports up to a certain threshold and then much higher duty rates on import values above the threshold). Canada has not yet announced any provisional (temporary) safeguards which are permitted in emergencies and can be imposed before the Tribunal's report. If a finding is issued and safeguard measures imposed, it will affect supply chain and sourcing decisions for Canadian food importers, distributors, and retailers.

The Tribunal's safeguard inquiry includes an evidence-gathering stage, a public hearing, and issuance of a final report made to the Minister of Finance. Parties wishing to participate in the inquiry process must file Notices of Participation by April 2, 2026. Full participation in the inquiry includes responding to Tribunal questionnaires (which comprise a significant portion of the Tribunal's evidentiary record), submitting written evidence and arguments, attending the hearing, and making final oral submissions. Participation can range from limited participation such as completing a questionnaire only, to full participation. The Tribunal's hearing is scheduled for June 15, 2026. The Tribunal has 180 days (until September 9, 2026) to issue its finding and recommendations.

In parallel, the Minister announced that Canada is also assessing the merits of a safeguard inquiry on wood cabinets and vanities, hardwood flooring and engineered wood storage furniture in response to a request from the Canadian Wood Products Alliance. While an order has not yet been made to commence this inquiry, the Minister's announcement likely telegraphs its impending initiation. Businesses should be prepared for upcoming disruptions in this space.

Further details on the canned and frozen vegetable safeguard inquiry

Following a formal complaint from the Canadian Association of Vegetable Growers and Processors, Canada, on recommendation by the Minister of Finance (Minister), ordered the Tribunal to commence an inquiry. The Tribunal's final report to the Minister will include its surge and injury determinations, and recommendations to the Minister on appropriate remedies. Notably, Canada's order directs the Tribunal to specifically consider effects on food affordability and food security for Canadian households in its final recommendations, so there is a significant public interest component to the inquiry in addition to the economic inquiry into conditions of competition in the Canadian market itself.

Because of various free trade agreements, there are certain separate analyses and determinations required under Canadian law for goods imported from certain countries with which Canada has entered into bilateral free trade agreements. These separate determinations will apply to goods originating from the United States, Mexico, Israel, Chile, Panama, Peru, Colombia and South Korea.

For more information on the implications of the inquiry, questions on how it may affect your business, or how to participate in the proceedings, please contact a member of Osler's International Trade practice.