

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS & MODERATORS



Philip Cartwright, Chair, CILTNA Ottawa Chapter

Philip is Chair of CILTNA's Ottawa Chapter and is the Senior Vice President of Global Public Affairs. Philip is also a Founding Board Member of the Canadian Advocacy Network.

He previously served as President of the Government Relations Institute of Canada (2017-2019), the national organization representing government relations professionals, and on the boards of the Canadian Transportation Research Forum and the Canadian Club of Ottawa. Philip has also been actively involved as a volunteer with the National Arts Centre. He holds a Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management (Hons.) degree from Carleton University's Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs and an Executive MBA from the Smith School of Business at Queen's University.



Arun Thangaraj, Deputy Minister of Transport

Arun Thangaraj was appointed Deputy Minister of Transport on February 20, 2023.

Before joining Transport Canada, Arun was the Associate Deputy Minister at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, following two years as the Associate Deputy Minister at Transport Canada.

Before these roles, he was Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Financial Officer at Global Affairs Canada and was the Deputy Chief Financial Officer at the former Canadian International Development Agency. He also brings experience and knowledge on transportation issues, from his time at the Canadian Transportation Agency from 2002 to 2011.

Arun received the Queen Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2013 for his contribution to the federal public service and to his community. He has served on various governance boards and is a sessional lecturer in the School of Public Administration at Carleton University.

Arun is a Chartered Professional Accountant and holds a Master of Arts in Public Administration from Carleton University, a Master of Business Administration from the University of Ottawa, and an Honours BA in Political Science from the University of Toronto.



Michael Keenan, Former Deputy Minister, Transport Canada

Michael Keenan served as a Deputy Minister in the Government of Canada for ten years, until he retired in January 2023 after a career spanning 35 years and seven departments.

Michael served as the Deputy Minister of Transport and, before that, the Associate Deputy Minister at Natural Resources Canada. He worked at Environment and Climate Change Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Canada School of Public Service, the Privy Council Office and Finance Canada.

Michael has extensive experience in organizational leadership, digital transformation, regulatory modernization, Indigenous engagement, emergency management, international relations, and policy development in multiple disciplines, including economic, social, environment, safety and security.

He holds a Bachelor's degree from Saint Francis Xavier University and a Master's degree in Economics from Queen's University.



Anna Barrera, Director, Public Affairs, UPS

Born and raised in Mexico City, Anna has developed an in-depth understanding of the importance of trade, supply chains and economic issues through her previous experiences. Anna has held several consulting, research and policy positions with organizations, including IQOM Commercial Intelligence in Mexico City, Environment Canada, and the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance and Dawson Strategic.

Between 2017 and 2021 she was the Senior Manager of Economics, Transportation and Trade Policy at the Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC), where she researched and provided analysis on antidumping and countervailing duties, rail modernization, free trade agreements, and tax reform.

For the last four years, as the director of Public Affairs for UPS Canada, Anna has worked on federal and provincial issues including the impacts of COVID-19 on the supply chain, trade issues, and transportation and infrastructure, and sustainability matters.

Anna has a bachelor's degree in International Business from the Tecnológico de Monterrey and a Master's Degree in International Trade from the University of Saskatchewan. In 2022 she completed her Certification of Association Executive (CAE), and is currently studying to take the Canada Customs Brokers Professional Examination. Anna is a champion for mental health and diversity and inclusion in the workplace.



Allison Gifford, Vice President, Policy and Public Affairs, Clear Strategy

Allison has spent the last 15 years working on or adjacent to Parliament Hill, providing strategic advice to political leaders, labour leaders, Fortune 50 companies, and non-profits. She has acquired deep policy expertise in tech, trade, supply chain logistics, transportation, labour, health, and sustainability. Keeping good public policy as her north star, Allison has built successful, lasting relationships between stakeholders and governments, helping them accomplish shared goals together.

Prior to joining Clear Strategy, Allison served as Vice-President of Policy at the Public Policy Forum, following eight years working with U.S. multinationals. As a senior public policy manager for Amazon, Allison advised business partners on all aspects of policy related to the company's retail operations, and established Amazon as Ontario's largest private-sector provider of community COVID-19 vaccinations. She also actively promoted the company's commitment to renewable energy, and was frequently called upon to discuss Amazon's purchase of Canada's largest renewable energy project, the Travers Solar Project. Prior to joining Amazon, Allison was Director of Public Affairs for UPS Canada, where she advanced digital trade policies during CUSMA negotiations, supported the funding negotiations and launch of UPS's first Canadian natural gas fleet, and helped federal and provincial governments navigate COVID-19 supply chain disruptions. At both companies, Allison designed community outreach programs, fostering greater partnership between business operations and their communities.

Allison began her career advising the Canadian Union of Public Employees on media relations strategy, acting frequently as the union's national spokesperson. In 2010, she moved to Parliament Hill, where she served as a speechwriter to New Democratic Party leader Jack Layton, and took on additional responsibilities as a press secretary and national spokesperson during federal elections. Allison later transitioned to health advocacy, where she acted as a senior public affairs advisor for the Mental Health Commission of Canada, overseeing the launch of the world's first national standard for psychological health and safety, and negotiating a ten-year funding renewal for the organization.

Allison lives in Ottawa with her husband and two children.



Shauna McMillan, CMLT, P. Eng., former CN executive and Member, Supply Chain Task Force

Ms. McMillan is a seasoned supply chain professional and passionate business executive. Most recently, she worked for Canadian National Railway (CN) for over 8 years, holding the position of Assistant Vice President, Sales & Industrial Products, and leading a team of sales professionals supporting forest products, metal, mineral and frac sand products to North American customers. Leveraging her experience not only from CN but also as a customer, she has developed, implemented and monitored strategic sales plans and direct sales activities, which has generated increased value for rail services and market share gains. Immediately prior, Ms. McMillan was appointed Chief of Staff to the President & CEO, serving a key strategic advisor role which required working closely with internal and external stakeholders to facilitate and track execution of key deliverables, including; safety, diversity, engagement, and customer centricity. Prior to that, she was the Director of Marketing (both for Intermodal and Automotive) for over four years.

During her time at CN, Ms. McMillan was also active in the community being elected to a director role on the Brampton Board of Trade where she served until late 2021.

Before joining CN, Ms. McMillan worked for Canadian Tire Corporation for 14 years where she honed her supply chain skills through a number of roles, from distribution and capacity planning to International Transportation Manager in which she oversaw procurement and operations for the global inbound product supply to the Canadian distribution network.

Ms. McMillan holds a P.Eng. (Ontario) and a Master of Science, Transport Management and Supply Chain from the University of Denver. She is a certified Supply Chain Professional and certified in Production and Inventory Management from the Association for Supply Chain Management.



Scott Blacklock, Integrated Scheduling and Logistics Potash, BHP

Scott Blacklock is the Superintendent Integrated Scheduling and Logistics Potash at leading global resources company BHP. He is responsible for all aspects of operational readiness and operations of BHP's logistics system from mine to port. With a background in engineering consulting and operations, and close to 20 years of experience in organizations across the Americas, Scott brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to his role at BHP's Potash business in Canada.

Scott's career began at the consulting engineering firm Golder Associates (now WSP) where he managed geotechnical projects for a variety of clients across Canada and in South America and Africa. In 2012 he joined BHP Billiton (now BHP) at their Ekati diamond mine in Canada's arctic. He was responsible for all aspects of the integrated planning and scheduling program for the surface and underground operations.

Returning to Saskatoon, Scott joined BHP's Potash project in 2017 and has been responsible for the design and execution of the Potash logistics system within North America. Scott and the team at BHP have formalized numerous contracts and are overseeing an extensive operational readiness program in advance of Jansen's first train of potash.

A passionate and present leader, Scott draws on his global customer and client experience and leverages his deep operational knowledge to bring people together to build BHP's logistics system.

Scott holds a Geological Engineering Degree from the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, and a Master of Business Administration from Royal Roads University in Victoria. He is also a Public Affairs Officer (and former Naval Warfare Officer) with the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve.

Scott and his wife Stephanie are the proud parents of three wonderful daughters who keep them busy traveling to and from the hockey rink. In his spare time, he enjoys flying and spending time at the family cabin in northern Saskatchewan.



Michael Sussman, Founder & Chairman, OnTrackNorthAmerica

Michael Sussman founded OnTrackNorthAmerica (www.OnTrackNorthAmerica.org), an infrastructure policy organization that brings together rail industry stakeholders, government agencies, businesses, and communities to collaborate across entire regions. Through his consulting firm Strategic Rail Finance (www.strategicrail.com), he tackles complex financing challenges by orchestrating innovative funding solutions that unite multiple lenders and government entities. Throughout his career in railroad finance and multiparty negotiations, Sussman has pioneered new approaches that align commercial interests with public policy, creating pathways for economic growth and environmental sustainability that benefit both businesses and the communities they serve. Mr. Sussman can be reached at msussman@strategicrail.com.



Vito Cerone, former Senior VP International Sales at CargoJet and former Air Canada executive

Vito Cerone is a seasoned air logistics executive with over 35 years of leadership in commercial strategy, global sales, and customer experience. Before retiring in March 2025 as Senior Vice President of Sales & Customer Experience at Cargojet Inc., he helped strengthen the company's position as Canada's leader in time-sensitive air cargo.

Previously, Vito spent more than 30 years with Air Canada, serving as Vice President of Cargo Sales & Commercial Strategy. Recognized for his strategic insight, collaborative leadership, and passion for innovation, he continues to share his expertise as an advisor and speaker within the global air logistics community.



Robert (Bob) Armstrong, FCILT, CITP, former CILTNA President

Bob Armstrong is president of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in North America and president of his own consulting firm Armstrong Trade & Logistics Advisory Services Inc. Bob has over 45 years of experience in the fields of global supply chain management, international trade, cross border logistics and customs regulations and procedures.

Bob has extensive involvement in the marine industry on the St. Lawrence Seaway-Great Lakes marine highway and served 8 years on the Board of Directors of the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation.

Bob also served as Chair and Treasurer on the Board of Directors of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

In March 2022, Bob was appointed to the Minister of Transport's Supply Chain Task Force.



Dr. Alan Barnard, Founder and CEO, Goldratt Research Labs

Dr. Alan Barnard is an entrepreneur, research scientist, philanthropist, and advisor on system optimization and supply chain design, and is considered one of the world's leading decision scientists and Theory of Constraints experts. He has performed projects for major companies including Microsoft, ABB, SAP, Cargill, NEC, Tata Steel, Cisco, and BHP Billiton, as well as government agencies and non-profits including the UN Development Programme doing assignments in many countries. He is a member of the prestigious Forbes Technology Council and has a Bachelor of Industrial Engineering, and both master's and PhD degrees in management of technology and innovation.