# Canadian company cuts ties with Uline over political donations and supports local suppliers



Toronto-based sustainable lifestyle company Etee Canada has made a notable shift in its supply chain by ending its relationship with Uline, a U.S. shipping goods supplier, after uncovering the company’s financial support for U.S. President Donald Trump’s 2024 campaign. This move reflects a growing trend among Canadian businesses opting to support domestic suppliers in light of political tensions and trade concerns between Canada and the United States.

Etee Canada, founded in Toronto’s Parkdale neighbourhood, specialises in plastic-free skincare and cleaning products, many of which are produced within Canada. The company’s CEO, Steve Reble, explained that the decision to sever ties with Uline came after a customer raised concerns about the political implications of using Uline’s shipping materials. “One of our customers reached out and was like, ‘I love your mission, I love your mandate, I love your products — but the boxes you're sending them in make no sense,’” he recalled.

Uline, known for its extensive catalogue of shipping and packaging supplies, is privately owned by Richard and Elizabeth Uihlein, who have donated approximately US$5 million to Trump’s 2024 presidential campaign. The Uihleins are also reported to have contributed over $100 million to Republican groups in the previous election cycle, data tracked by Open Secrets reveals.

Roger noted that Uline had been one of Etee’s primary suppliers, with hundreds of thousands of dollars spent annually on items ranging from cardboard boxes to gloves. However, with recent political rhetoric from Trump—including references to Canada as the “51st state” and threats of using “economic force” for annexation—Reble felt compelled to rethink his company’s supplier choices. “All of a sudden I'm like, ‘Oh my God, by buying from Uline, we're essentially supporting the annexation of our country,’” he said.

In seeking alternatives, Etee identified two Greater Toronto Area (GTA)-based companies: A Box Broker and Atlantic Packaging Company. Both suppliers offer recycled or used boxes that more closely align with Etee’s sustainability goals while also providing cost savings. “They're way more aligned with our mission,” Reble said. “Plus they're cheaper.”

Reble acknowledged that Uline’s broad product catalogue and brand recognition often make them a convenient choice for Canadian businesses. However, he stressed that domestic companies could find competitive and innovative options with a little research. “There's so many cool companies right in the GTA that are doing innovative things,” he added.

The decision to prioritise Canadian suppliers coincides with a significant shift in Etee’s customer demographics and sales. Since the outset of 2025, the company has seen a 50 per cent increase in sales, primarily driven by a surge in Canadian buyers. Before the rise of the ‘Buy Canada’ movement—in part a response to Trump’s tariff threats—about 70 per cent of Etee’s customers were American. This has now reversed, with Canadian clients making up approximately 70 per cent of their customer base.

Similarly, A Box Broker’s president and founder Ian Draper confirmed a boost in business linked to Canadian companies moving away from Uline. Speaking to TorontoToday, Draper shared that about eight to ten new clients recently revealed they had switched their supplier from Uline to his Canadian company. “Everyone's trying to support local as much as possible, even businesses,” Draper noted.

Etee Canada’s pivot illustrates a developing pattern where Canadian enterprises are increasingly looking inward for suppliers that better match their values and the evolving expectations of their customers amid complex cross-border trade dynamics.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.opensecrets.org/> - This URL supports the claim that Richard and Elizabeth Uihlein have donated to political campaigns, including significant contributions to Republican groups and the Trump campaign.
2. <https://www.uline.com/> - This website corroborates Uline's extensive catalogue of shipping and packaging supplies and provides information on its products.
3. <https://www.etee.ca/> - This URL provides information on Etee Canada, its mission, and products. It supports the claim about Etee Canada’s specialization in plastic-free skincare and cleaning products.
4. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/services/tariffs.html> - This URL provides information on trade policies and tariffs affecting Canada, which relates to the trade dynamics between Canada and the U.S.
5. <https://www.globeandmail.com/business/article-canadas-buy-local-movement-gains-momentum/> - This article supports the trend of Canadian businesses supporting domestic suppliers and the 'Buy Canada' movement.
6. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/804654/canada-trade-balance-with-the-us/> - This URL provides data on Canada-U.S. trade relations, supporting the discussion of cross-border trade dynamics.
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