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## Keep complaining about price gaps

The Gazette

*Monday, February 18, 2008*

Automakers are finally listening to their Canadian customers, and that's good news, as far as it goes. As The Gazette reported Friday, some manufacturers have now reduced their prices to reflect the strength of the loonie.

Volkswagen made it cheaper to own a Passat or a Jetta this week, and Toyota has cut prices on 16 models. Porsche and Hyundai have cut prices, too, and others might follow.

These price changes - welcome though they are - give Canadian consumers no reason to be complacent. There are still big, unexplained price gaps between Canada and the U.S. on many car models. The loonie is now close to par with the greenback, and prices - on cars and other goods - should reflect that.

Car manufacturers have been able to get away with this gap only because they have prevented price competition by making it virtually impossible for Canadians to buy new cars from U.S. dealers. Free trade, they seem to figure, should apply only to industry.

Canadian consumers need to keep complaining and to keep asking for price parity. And why is our federal government making it so easy for big multinational companies to make Canadians pay more?

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