August 9, 2019

Hon. Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour
140 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau, QC  K1A 0J9

Dear Minister:

Further to my letter of May 16, 2019, I am writing to share our members’ ongoing concerns with the federal Modern Labour Standards that are scheduled to come into effect on September 1, 2019.

The chamber network consists of over 450 chambers of commerce and boards of trade, representing 200,000 businesses of all sizes in all sectors of the economy and in all regions of the country. This includes numerous federally-regulated businesses in the banking, transportation, marine shipping and ports, courier and postal services and telecom sectors. The employers’ association, FETCO, (Federally Regulated Employers – Transportation and Communications) is also one of our members.

We welcomed the government’s decision to delay the new labour standards coming into effect from June to September 2019, as well as the consultations with key stakeholders throughout the summer months. The Canadian Chamber participated in several of the information sessions and sector-specific technical briefings. Alongside colleagues from Employment and Social Development Canada, we heard from businesses about the profound operational challenges of several problematic provisions, including: i) the right to refuse overtime due to family obligations; (ii) the requirement of 96 hours written notice for shift schedules; (iii) 24 hours written notice of shift changes; (iv) 30-minute break for every 5 hours worked; and (v) 8-hour minimum break between work shifts.

Exemptions are being sought in each sector in these areas and, at least in one case, a sector-wide exemption is being requested. As stated in our May 16, 2019 letter, it is imperative to have these exemptions in place before any changes come into force.
As the regulatory process for exemptions will not be complete within the next month, the Canadian Chamber is asking the federal government to postpone implementation of labour standards amendments until all processes align. This will ensure operational business continuity, fair employee standards of living, a thriving economy and a competitive Canada.

Should you require any further information regarding these concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Perrin Beatty, P.C., O.C.
President and Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Chamber of Commerce