

April 20, 2018

Hon. Marc Garneau, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Transport
330 Sparks Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0N5

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

Dear Ministers:

I am writing to you regarding the collective bargaining negotiations between Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW).

While I understand that parties continue to negotiate in good faith, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and our members are extremely concerned about the potential for a work stoppage as early as Saturday, April 21.

With TCRC and IBEW serving a 72-hour strike notice to CPR, Canada is facing serious economic consequences if there is a work stoppage. Businesses and Canadian consumers will be hurt by a stoppage of any duration, which will cause significant disruption to Canada's supply chains that move commodities and goods to and from Canadian businesses to our trading partners around the world. It will have negative impacts on Canada's grain, automobile, potash, coal, forestry, chemical and consumer goods industries, among others. The timing is especially problematic given the challenging winter for freight rail as there is little excess capacity currently in the rail system.

Canada's railways are an essential service that directly affect Canadian jobs and Canada's economic prosperity. In addition to halting the movement of goods, a work stoppage could affect passenger rail services in Montreal and Toronto creating problems for employees and businesses in those regions.

On behalf of Canadian businesses that depend on our rail system, I would strongly encourage the federal government to use all possible measures to prevent a work stoppage. While a negotiated outcome is always the desired conclusion, we recognize that it is not always possible. In the event of a stoppage, we would encourage the government to move decisively to limit the economic repercussions by introducing legislation to ensure the continuation of railway operations.

On behalf of our members, please accept my commitment to work with the government on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Perrin Beatty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Perrin Beatty
President and Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Chamber of Commerce