



January 31, 2023

Ms. Zia Proulx
Director General, Strategic Policy, Analysis and Workplace Information
Labour Program
Employment and Social Development Canada
Email: zia.proulx@hrsdcc-rhdcc.gc.ca

Re: Submission to the Government on “Prohibiting replacement workers in federally regulated industries”

Dear Ms. Proulx:

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to Employment and Social Development Canada on its consultations regarding “Prohibiting replacement workers in federally regulated industries.”

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce is the country’s largest business association with a network of over 400 chambers of commerce and boards of trade representing nearly 200,000 businesses of all sizes, in all sectors and regions of our country.

The proposed legislation on prohibiting replacement workers in federally regulated industries raises serious concerns for many of our members, including many who play an essential role in growing our economy and ensuring our supply chains are moving.

While the Canadian Chamber of Commerce respects the right to collective bargaining, the proposed anti-replacement worker legislation goes too far and has the potential to destabilize our economy. It will change the balance of power we currently have within our labour relations system, leading to more labour strife within key sectors of our economy.

Within our current labour relations system, replacement workers allow organizations in sectors such as trucking, rail, ports, telecom, and air, to provide a basic level of service that preserve critical services to Canadians. Without the countervailing force that the threat of using replacement workers represents, unions are encouraged to strike rather than bargain collectively, ensuring significant damage to Canada’s economy and our reputation as a reliable place to do business. The data clearly demonstrates that, where replacement worker bans exist, there are more strikes and they last longer.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce encourages the government to engage in meaningful consultations that will allow for the private sector, unions and government to creative solutions to avoid disrupting the supply chain. For example, the Government should consider providing the authority to the Minister of Labour, or the federal cabinet, to compel binding arbitration for the resolution of a labour dispute -- prior to a work stoppage – in sectors that are essential to Canada’s supply chains, such



as railways and ports. This change would help Canada's supply chains avoid costly disruptions from work stoppages impacting the national economy.

Canadians are already feeling the pinch from inflationary pressures in our economy. Any actions that would further disrupt or delay supply chain processes will only raise costs more which in turn will get passed down to Canadians. Canada's reputation as a destination of choice for doing business relies on a resilient and reliable system. We cannot afford to introduce such legislation at this time.

Sincerely,

Robin Guy
Senior Director, Transportation, Infrastructure and Regulatory Policy
Canadian Chamber of Commerce