

May 23, 2024

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan Jr.
Minister of Labour and Seniors
Member of Parliament for St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador
Place du Portage Phase II
165 de l'Hôtel-de-Ville Street
Gatineau, Québec J8X 3X2

Via electronic mail: MinistrePT-LPMinister@labour-travail.gc.ca

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez
Minister of Transport and Quebec Lieutenant
Member of Parliament for Honoré-Mercier, Quebec
330 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N5

Via electronic mail: TC.MinisterofTransport-MinistredesTransports.TC@tc.gc.ca

Re: Potential Labour Disruption in Class I railways

Dear Ministers:

We are expressing our alarm over the potential for a labour disruption that would affect Class I railways. After the economic damage inflicted by the strikes in our ports in British Columbia and the St-Lawrence Seaway, a third and fourth major strike in less than a year would be a terrible blow to Canada's diminishing reputation as a reliable place to do business; the government must engage to prevent yet another shut down of a major trade artery.

While we recognize the request to the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) seeking to determine whether operations must continue to prevent an immediate and serious danger to the safety or health of the public, it will not solve the issue; business uncertainty drags on and confidence in Canada's reliability as a trading partner continues to deteriorate.

According to the Railway Association of Canada, our two freight railways transported a total of more than \$380 billion worth of goods in 2022, and approximately half of the country's exports. With our railways running 365 days per year, a strike interrupting service on both railways' Canadian networks is estimated to impact the flow of more than \$1 billion of goods every single day.

As trade accounts for **more than two thirds of Canada's GDP**, our ability to get goods to and from market determines whether we will be competitive in the global economy, but our supply chains are only as strong as their weakest link. This is not the time to put further strain on a

system that is under pressure and once again jeopardize Canada's reputation as a stable place to do business; we need to ensure our supply chains are reliable and resilient.

Given the sheer volume of goods that move by rail, a breakdown in operations would have severe impacts that span almost all industries across the country—manufacturing, retail, agriculture, automotive, construction, healthcare, energy, to name only a few. We simply don't have the capacity in other modes of transportation to replace the movement of goods by rail.

On behalf of the Canadian business community, we urge the government to actively engage in ensuring a successful bargaining process, and in the event of failure, that it be prepared to act to prevent another labour disruption. Canadian families and businesses simply cannot afford to endure more economic harm before a resolution is seriously pursued.

We respect the right to collective bargaining and believe sincerely that the best deals are reached at the table. The government can play an important role in ensuring an agreement is in place. These repeated work stoppages are damaging the economy, jeopardizing predictability for businesses, and escalating uncertainty for Canadian families who are contending with an increased cost of living.

Sincerely,

Alberta Chambers of Commerce
Atlantic Chamber of Commerce
Battlefords & District Chamber of Commerce
BC Chamber of Commerce
Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce
Burlington Chamber of Commerce
Carleton Place & District Chamber of Commerce
Chamber of Commerce Brantford-Brant

Chamber of Commerce for Greater Moncton
Cap-Acadie Chamber of Commerce
Chetwynd Chamber of Commerce
Cold Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce
Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce

Elk Point & District Chamber of Commerce
Estevan Chamber of Commerce
Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce
Fort St. John and District Chamber of Commerce
Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce
Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce
Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce
Greater Vancouver Board of Trade
Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce
Guelph Chamber of Commerce
Halifax Chamber of Commerce

Aluminium Association of Canada
Beer Canada
Canadian Association of Importers and Exporters
Canadian Canola Growers Association
Canadian Cattle Association
Canadian Chamber of Commerce
Canadian Construction Association
Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association
Canadian Federation of Independent Business
Canadian Food Exporters Association
Canadian Franchise Association
Canadian Home Builders' Association
Canadian International Freight Forwarders Association
Canadian Meat Council
Canadian Steel Producers Association
Canadian Sugar Institute
Canadian Toy Association
Canadian Trucking Alliance
Canola Council of Canada
Cement Association of Canada
Chamber of Marine Commerce
Chemistry Industry Association of Canada
Electricity Canada
Electro-Federation Canada

Hamilton Chamber of Commerce
High River Chamber of Commerce
Humboldt & District Chamber of Commerce
Jasper Park Chamber of Commerce
Kamloops & District Chamber of Commerce
Manitoba Chambers of Commerce
Melfort Trade Alliance Chamber of Commerce
Mississauga Board of Trade
North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce
North Vancouver Chamber
Oakville Chamber of Commerce
Ontario Chamber of Commerce
Orillia & District Chamber of Commerce
Owen Sound & District Chamber of Commerce
Peace River and District Chamber of Commerce
Prince Albert & District Chamber of Commerce
Quinte West Chamber of Commerce
Red Deer District Chamber
Redwater & District Chamber of Commerce
Regina & District Chamber of Commerce
Rocky Mountain House & District Chamber of Commerce
Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce
Sault Ste. Marie Chamber of Commerce
Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce
St. John's Board of Trade
Surrey Board of Trade
The Edson and District Chamber of Commerce
The Greater Barrie Chamber of Commerce
The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce
Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce
Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce
Valley Chamber of Commerce
Weyburn Chamber of Commerce
Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce
Yarmouth & Area Chamber of Commerce
Yorkton Chamber of Commerce

Federally Regulated Employers – Transportation and Communications
Fertilizer Canada
Food and Beverage Canada
Food, Health & Consumer Products of Canada
Food Producers of Canada
Forest Products Association of Canada
Freight Management Association of Canada
Global Automakers of Canada
Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association of Canada
L'Association du camionnage du Québec
Medtech Canada
Railway Association of Canada
Responsible Distribution Canada
Retail Council of Canada
Restaurants Canada
Shipping Federation of Canada
Spirits Canada
The Mining Association of Canada
Western Canadian Shippers' Coalition
Western Retail Lumber Association