



Impending National Rail Strike Will Cause Untenable Damage to Canada's Meat Industry

August 19, 2024 - In anticipation of a national rail strike as early as Thursday, August 22nd, the Canadian Meat Council (CMC) and the Canadian Pork Council (CPC) are urgently calling on the federal government to employ section 107 of the Canada Labour Code to avoid the unprecedented damage to industry this disruption to service will cause.

Employing section 107 would direct the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) to help parties reach an agreement under binding arbitration and suspend the ability for either lockouts or strikes pending an agreement. This will provide needed certainty to Canadian farmers and processors, and their customers around the world.

"Canada's red meat processors need stable, reliable supply chains to run their businesses. Another interruption in service will result in millions of dollars in losses, irreversible reputational damage, environmental disposal challenges, and enormous waste," said Chris White, CEO, Canadian Meat Council.

Last summer's Port of Vancouver strike disrupted \$10.7 billion dollars' worth of trade during the 35 days of strike action. The impacts of two Class 1 railways striking at once will have even worse, unprecedented ramifications.

Some processing plants anticipate losing up to \$3 million dollars per week. The initial impact will be a delay in customer deliveries, followed by a plant shutdown within 7-10 days of strike action. Once the rails resume it will take 2-5 weeks for plants to ramp back up to normal capacity.

"The Canadian pork industry relies on the seamless operation of our transportation networks to feed our animals and deliver high-quality products to global markets. The ongoing rail and port disruptions threaten the livelihood of our producers, the welfare of our animals, and Canada's reputation as a reliable trading partner," said René Roy, Chair, Canadian Pork Council. "It is crucial that the federal government takes action to ensure the movement of perishable goods like pork and essential supplies like animal feed. The feed our pigs rely on to survive is shipped by rail, and without a reliable and steady supply, their welfare is at risk. The stakes are simply too high to allow these disruptions to go unaddressed."

While CMC and CPC respect workers' rights to collective bargaining and believe the best deals are reached at the table, those interests must be balanced against the public interest. The



federal government must take action by employing section 107 of the Canada Labour Code to help parties reach an agreement under binding arbitration.

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About Canadian Meat Council

The Canadian Meat Council represents federally licensed meat packers and meat processors as well as suppliers of goods and services to the meat industry. As an industry association, CMC provides advocacy on behalf of its members and works to secure and improve Canada's global meat competitiveness. CMC also promotes a balanced diet which includes high-quality and nutritious Canadian meat. CMC provides services to its members with four key priorities: Regulatory Compliance, International Trade, Public and Stakeholder Engagement and Member Services.

About Canadian Pork Council

The CPC is the national voice for pork producers in Canada. A federation of nine provincial pork organizations representing more than 7,000 farms, the organization plays a leadership role in achieving and maintaining a dynamic and prosperous Canadian pork sector. The CPC serves its membership through national and international advocacy efforts as well as through the development and implementation of initiatives, such as food safety, animal care and health, traceability, environment and sustainability, international trade and nutrition.