

November 22, 2019

The Honourable Filomena Tassi, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Labour
140 Promenade du Portage, Phase IV, 12th Floor
Gatineau, QC K1A 0J9

Dear Minister,

Congratulations on your re-election as the Member of Parliament for Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas and on your appointment as Canada's Minister of Labour. As representatives of Canada's agriculture/agri-food sector, we look forward to working with you, your staff and your officials on issues affecting this vital contributor to Canada's economic growth and prosperity.

We are writing to you today with regard to the strike by the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference against Canadian National Railway (CNR) that began on November 19th. We are mindful and appreciative of the need to respect the collective bargaining process and of the federal mediation efforts being made at present. However, we want to alert you to the need for a speedy response to this situation, in light of the serious consequences that this strike has already had – and will continue to have – on our sector.

Canada's agricultural sector relies heavily on the transportation of our crop inputs (e.g. fertilizer), energy supplies (e.g., propane) and commodities (e.g. grains and meats) by rail. Any disruption to this essential service can lead to loss of markets and crops and could have a negative impact on animal welfare. All or any of these issues will have a significant and negative effect on our farm families and on those employed throughout our supply chain.

We respectfully ask that you pursue all avenues within your authority to help bring the talks between Teamsters Canada Rail Conference and CNR to a rapid successful conclusion. This includes strongly encouraging the two parties to enter into voluntary binding arbitration.

[Signature page follows]

Thank you for considering our request to act expeditiously in bringing the CNR strike to an end.

Sincerely,



Association of Equipment Manufacturers



Canadian Canola Growers Association



Canada Grains Council



Canadian Horticultural Council



Canadian Meat Council



Canadian Pork Council



Canadian Produce Marketing Association



Canadian Seed Trade Association



Canola Council of Canada



Canadian Oil Seed Producers Association



CropLife Canada



Dairy Farmers of Canada



Food & Beverage Canada



Food & Consumer Products of Canada



Grain Growers of Canada



Soy Canada



Syngenta Canada Inc.



Canadian Federation of Agriculture



Canadian Cattlemen's Association



Fertilizer Canada

c.c. The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Canada
Hon. Marc Garneau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Transport
Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food