

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](mailto: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](mailto: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	Aluminium Association of Canada
Atlantic Chamber of Commerce	Beer Canada
Battlefords & District Chamber of Commerce	Canadian Association of Importers and Exporters
BC Chamber of Commerce	Canadian Canola Growers Association
Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce	Canadian Cattle Association
Burlington Chamber of Commerce	Canadian Chamber of Commerce
Carleton Place & District Chamber of Commerce	Canadian Construction Association
Chamber of Commerce Brantford-Brant	Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association
Chamber of Commerce for Greater Moncton	Canadian Federation of Independent Business
Cap-Acadie Chamber of Commerce	Canadian Food Exporters Association
Chetwynd Chamber of Commerce	Canadian Franchise Association
Cold Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce	Canadian Home Builders' Association
Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce	Canadian International Freight Forwarders Association
Elk Point & District Chamber of Commerce	Canadian Meat Council
Estevan Chamber of Commerce	Canadian Steel Producers Association
Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce	Canadian Sugar Institute
Fort St. John and District Chamber of Commerce	Canadian Toy Association
Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce	Canadian Trucking Alliance
Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce	Canola Council of Canada
Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce	Cement Association of Canada
Greater Vancouver Board of Trade	Chamber of Marine Commerce
Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce	Chemistry Industry Association of Canada
Guelph Chamber of Commerce	Electricity Canada
Halifax Chamber of Commerce	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