



April 24th, 2024

The Hon. Seamus O'Regan, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Labour and Seniors
Place du Portage Phase II
165 de l'Hôtel-de-Ville Street
Gatineau, Québec J8X 3X2

Via email: MinistrePTLPMinister@labour-travail.gc.ca

Dear Minister O'Regan,

The Wheat Growers Association is a national not-for-profit organization that represents millions of acres of grain farmers.

Over the past dozen years, there have been more than 10 major stoppages due to union actions, as well as several minor ones. These types of stoppages create the worst scenarios for everyone in the food supply chain – farmers, exporters, producers and consumers alike.

When unions strike, grain elevators fill up quickly and farmers are not able to deliver grain. Farmers do not receive payment for their crop until it is delivered, therefore causing cash flow problems. This is particularly crucial during seeding season when farmers have to pay for their inputs.

When the food supply chain is interrupted, all costs eventually rise for the consumer. At a time when millions of Canadians are annually using food banks, this is a terrible outcome and unacceptable.

Over the past year, union rail workers have had annual wages ranging from \$110,000 - \$250,000 far above the Canadian national average of \$64,850. Similarly, the increase in union wages far exceeds the Consumer Price Index.

Grain farmers specifically need to ensure that the past year's harvest continues to move to export markets and that they are able to receive fertilizer, machinery parts and other inputs in order to successfully plant the 2024 crop.

We call upon you and your Ministry to ensure that there is no work stoppage to Canada's rail system. As an immense country, dependent upon rail transportation, it is imperative that products not be held up by a union bent on extorting more money from the supply chain, which means higher prices for consumers that are already stretched beyond limit.

We ask that this item be your top priority and ensure that farmers and consumers will not be harmed by an unnecessary work stoppage.

We await your earliest action and reply in this matter.

Yours truly,

Gunter Jochum
President