



May 21, 2024

Canadian Industrial Relations Board
C.D. Howe Building
240 Sparks Street, 4th Floor West
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0X8

Att. Ginette Brazeau, Chairperson

Via email: CIRB-Filing-CCRI-Depot@tribunal.gc.ca

Re: Board file no. 037673-C

A referral concerning Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway Company (CPKC) and two bargaining units represented by the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC)

and

Board file no. 037674-C

A referral concerning the Canadian National Railway Company (CN) and TCRC

Dear Ms. Brazeau,

On behalf of the Wheat Growers Association (WGA), thank you for the opportunity to comment on the referrals made by the Minister of Labour under section 87.4(5) of the Canada Labour Code.

The Wheat Growers Association represents millions of acres of grain farmers. We have advocated for the needs of grain farmers across the prairies for over 50 years.

The request for submissions, while focusing on heavy fuels, food, and water treatment materials, clearly includes food and food production for all regions of Canada. The agriculture growing season is short, and our livelihood depends on uninterrupted rail service year-round. Grain and fertilizer are among the highest volume products transported by rail, and there is no viable transportation alternative available for the gross tonnage of grain used for both human and animal feed, as well as fertilizers such as potash. While rail is essential for the delivery of food products to remote communities, it is also essential to food production and the food security of all Canadians, as well as the international market.

This possible strike situation putting our supply chain once again into jeopardy has dire consequences for farmers as well as our broader agriculture and food industry and the Canadian economy. We know the impact previous supply chain disruptions have caused for Canada's reputation on world markets. Please listen as farm organizations and associations, as well as business groups from across the economy, who depend on rail service, express their strongest concerns about another work stoppage to our rail service.

Any disruption to the Canadian food supply chain will have immediate and long-lasting impacts on our national economy, as well as our reputation as a reliable supplier of grains and oilseeds. We are currently competing in a world market where our competitors do not face similar government policies that already allow them an advantage. Railway work stoppages will further exacerbate the need to move needed products to and from ports.

With this in mind, we ask the CIRB and the Government of Canada to recognize the essential nature and the complexities of rail transportation and act accordingly. There is a range of decisions that could be put in place ranging from essential service to binding arbitration.

We have previously written to the Federal Minister of Labour and Seniors to address this issue. A copy of this letter may be found here: <https://wheatgrowers.ca/wp-content/uploads/Min.-Reagan-RR-Strike-April-24-2024.pdf>). In addition, we will be following up this correspondence to Minister O'Regan with a recommendation that given the time of year and the days remaining in the House of Commons calendar, that he prepare back to work legislation should a work stoppage occur.

We thank you for the opportunity to make this submission and look forward to your decision that will support food security, farmers, and our national economy.

Yours truly,



Gunter Jochum
President