



September 27, 2024

The Honourable Steven MacKinnon, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Labour and Seniors
Member of Parliament for Gatineau, Quebec
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

The Honourable Anita Anand, P.C., M.P.
President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Transport
Member of Parliament for Oakville, Ontario
330 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N5

Via electronic mail: TC.MinisterofTransport-MinistredesTransports.TC@tc.gc.ca

Dear Ministers:

I am writing to relay concerns we are hearing from our membership about the ongoing strike by Grain Workers Local Union 333 at six grain terminal locations in Vancouver. This strike is having considerable impacts on major Canadian industries, as well as several communities whose economies rely on farmers' ability to harvest and ship their crops.

In 2023, terminal elevators at the Port of Vancouver received just over half of all grain produced across Canada. They handle and export most of the grain that farmers in the prairies grow. This strike will stop nearly 100,000 metric tonnes of grain that flow through these terminals daily, resulting in a loss of \$35 million in potential exports every single day.

There will also be an impact on the Canadian canola industry, as there are numerous businesses exporting canola products or using them in food manufacturing. Nearly three quarters of canola port exports are shipped through Vancouver, and given current market and geopolitical headwinds, it is more important than ever to cement Canada's reputation as a reliable supplier. Anything that would erode that brand will have significant medium to long-term repercussions.

The Canadian Prairies are particularly vulnerable, and the timing could not be worse with harvest underway. As landlocked economies, access to export markets through British Columbia's ports is of critical importance, and this is another significant labour disruption on Canada's West Coast, following last year's strike that shut down operations for two weeks.

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Farmers and workers in our Prairie provinces do not have a seat at the table during these negotiations, and unfortunately, can do little but suffer the consequences. When farmers can't deliver their grain, they are not receiving income and are unable to participate in their local economy. This has a profound effect on the entire business community that stretches beyond the agriculture sector, as many of these communities are dependent on the success of their farmers and ranchers.

Canada's supply chains have been under constant strain over the past few years due to wildfires, floods, blockades, and the COVID-19 pandemic. We saw more than three weeks of strikes last year across the ports in British Columbia and the St. Lawrence Seaway, and as you know all too well, labour disputes that paralyzed Canada's rail network only a month ago.

According to Statistics Canada's Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, 90 percent of businesses that recently experienced supply chain obstacles expect those difficulties to either persist, or worsen, over the coming three months. Businesses need predictability in our supply chains, and yet another labour disruption has unfortunately continued the alarming trend of work stoppages limiting Canada's ability to deliver the goods.

Among our membership, the following Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade have been clear in vocalizing the consequences of a drawn-out strike on their communities:

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| Alberta Chambers of Commerce | Lloydminster Chamber of Commerce |
| Battlefords & District Chamber of Commerce | Mississauga Board of Trade |
| Breton & District Chamber of Commerce | Morinville & District Chamber of Commerce |
| Cold Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce | Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce |
| Devon & District Chamber of Commerce | Peace River and District Chamber of Commerce |
| Drumheller & District Chamber of Commerce | Pigeon Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce |
| Estavan Chamber of Commerce | Ponoka & District Chamber of Commerce |
| Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce | Prince Albert & District Chamber of Commerce |
| Fort Saskatchewan & District Chamber of Commerce | Red Deer & District Chamber of Commerce |
| Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce | Redwater & District Chamber of Commerce |
| High River & District Chamber of Commerce | Rocky Mountain House & District Chamber of Commerce |
| Humboldt Chamber of Commerce | Commerce |
| Leduc, Nisku & Wetaskiwin Regional Chamber of Commerce | Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce |
| Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce | Swift Current & District Chamber of Commerce |
| | Yorkton Chamber of Commerce |

While we appreciate your engagement and efforts to have all parties resume negotiations alongside federal mediators, we urge you to remain actively involved to ensure this strike is resolved as quickly as possible. We must limit the growing damage to the communities in our Canadian Prairies, as well as to Canada's economy.

Sincerely,

Pascal Chan
Senior Director, Transportation, Infrastructure & Construction
Canadian Chamber of Commerce