



Alberta  
Barley

Better Together

March 15, 2022

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan  
Minister of Labour  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
K1A 0A6

RE: Teamster's Canada Rail Conference labour conflict

Dear Minister O'Regan,

On behalf of the 14,000 farmers we represent, the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions are writing to express significant concern over the impending Canadian Pacific (CP) railway labour strike. With the strike happening as early as March 16, the commissions are calling for the Government of Canada to take immediate action to avoid impacts of any disruption of CP service as it will have a devastating impact on western Canadian farmers who are dealing with numerous mounting challenges in addition to trying to recover from the worst drought in 20 years.

Any working stoppage presents a serious threat to reliable rail service – the lifeline of the Canadian agriculture industry – and economic losses from rail disruptions are borne by farmers. Western Canadian farmers are already unsure if they will receive the essential crop inputs of fertilizer and crop protection products in time for the start of seeding season, which is only weeks away. The potential Teamster's Canada Rail Conference (TCRC) strike poses a serious risk to the success of the upcoming growing season by creating additional delays in crop input deliveries that should already be on farms.

Alberta's middle class family farms are depending on the 2022 crop to financially recover after 2021 crop production was reduced by 40 per cent due to Western Canada experiencing the worst drought in 20 years. A rail strike that prevents critical farm inputs from arriving on time will limit the potential of the 2022 crop, add further stress to farmers', and constrain family farm cash flows at a time when they need marketing certainty the most.

Canadian railways are the artery for western Canadian farmers to get their grain to key markets. Past rail strikes have not only had crippling effects on grain farmers, but on the reputation of Canada as a reliable supplier of commodities to our international buyers.

While the commissions respect the process of collective bargaining, even a few days of disruption in rail service can cause a massive system backlog and economic losses for farmers,

rural economies and the Canadian economy at large. The commissions urge the federal government to intervene through which ever measures necessary to ensure a resolution to the dispute that protects against negative economic consequences for Alberta farmers and the Canadian economy. In the event of a strike, it is imperative that we count on you to prevent a work stoppage. Now more than ever, Canada's agriculture sector and Canadians need stability to our vital railway system.

We appreciate your attention to this serious matter. Please do not hesitate to contact our Senior Manager of Government Relations and Policy, Shannon Sereda at [ssereda@albertawheatbarley.com](mailto:ssereda@albertawheatbarley.com) for further information.

Sincerely,



Tara Sawyer  
Alberta Barley, Chair



Greg Sears  
Alberta Wheat Commission, Chair

**CC:**

The Honourable Marie Claude-Bibeau  
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
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The Honourable Omar Alghabra  
Minister of Transport  
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