

June 20, 2023

Hon. Seamus O'Regan  
Minister of Labour  
Gatineau, Quebec  
J8X 3X2

Dear Minister O'Regan,

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union represents some 7,000 employees that move cargo at ports in British Columbia, including the Port of Vancouver (Canada's busiest and North America's second busiest marine port). As you know, these employees have given their union leadership a strike mandate. A crippling work stoppage could occur as early as June 24, 2023 – just four days from now.

If a labour disruption does occur, it will unavoidably disrupt Canada's supply chains and the broader economy. While four days might seem like a reasonable amount of time for the two parties to reach agreement, this is a labour dispute that has been simmering for months. Public reports indicate that conciliation efforts were unsuccessful and ended on May 30.

A threatened labour disruption at ports on the United States' Pacific Coast was only resolved through active, high-level government leadership to intervene and address issues between the parties and avert job action. We respectfully urge the government to do the same here. We urge you to use every tool at your disposal to prevent any work stoppage at B.C. ports to avoid the economic harm such a stoppage would cause.

The very risk of such work stoppages is damaging as shippers will divert cargo away from a port if they are not assured that it can handle a shipment. This could create trade disruptions that take weeks or months to correct. Four days of perceived inaction could have deep and lasting effects on international confidence in Canada's ports and Canada as a place to invest and do business.

As Canadian agricultural workers, business owners, and families are struggling with generationally high inflation, a strike that will increase costs and compound delays is the last thing anyone needs. Such a work stoppage will hurt producers, shippers, and consumers alike.

Our member railways are a backbone of Canada's economy. They carry more than \$350 billion worth of goods and more than 50% of Canada's total exports to market. Their activities at Canadian ports are vital to national wellbeing, as rail carries the goods that we all use in our daily lives.

Thank you for your serious consideration of these concerns and, in advance, for acting appropriately to resolve this situation expeditiously.

Sincerely,



Marc Brazeau  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Railway Association of Canada

Cc: Hon. Omar Alghabra, Minister of Transport  
Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food  
Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Natural Resources Canada  
Hon. Mary Ng, Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and  
Economic Development  
Mike Leonard, President and CEO, British Columbia Maritime Employers Association  
Robin Silvester, President and CEO, Vancouver Fraser Port Authority