

For Immediate Release:

Canadian Grain Farmers Applaud Federal Government for Moving Forward on Rail Service Review

(Ottawa, ON. Thursday September 24, 2009) – The Grain Growers of Canada are pleased that the Honourable Rob Merrifield, Minister of State (Transport) has announced the appointees to the Level of Service Review panel.

“Canadian farmers have put a lot of effort into seeing the Level of Service Review move forward in a timely manner and this is an important step in the process”, said Doug Robertson, President of the Grain Growers of Canada. “We are also pleased with the quality of people appointed. Quite a number of industry people had stressed the importance of appointing a knowledgeable chair and shippers’ representative.”

“The Chairperson, Walter Paszkowski, is a former provincial Minister of Agriculture and has a good understanding of grain and rail transportation issues. Jointly with the Coalition of Rail Shippers, we had strongly recommended Bill LeGrow, who has extensive experience as a rail shipper and so we commend the Government and the Minister for working closely with us to ensure the panel is well-balanced and knowledgeable”, said Robertson.

After Bill C-8 received Royal Assent on February 28, 2008, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, initiated the Review, consisting of two phases. The first phase entailed a series of consultations aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the logistical issues surrounding railway performance. The second phase will be conducted by the three expert panel members appointed yesterday. They will make recommendations to improve rail service in Canada, including both commercial and regulatory aspects.

“Every year we hear stories of how railcars are not spotted on time, or not spotted at all, costing shippers and farmers substantial dollars in demurrage, lost sales opportunities and extra labour costs”, said Robertson. “Therefore we look forward to the panel’s solutions next summer that we anticipate will lead to greatly improved rail service and shipping opportunities”.

The Grain Growers of Canada represent the interests of the 80,000 Canadian grain, pulse and oilseed producers who are members of the Alberta Grain Commission, Alberta Barley Commission, Alberta Oat Rye and Triticale Association, Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission, Atlantic Grains Council, Alberta Pulse Growers, British Columbia Grain Producers Association, Canadian Canola Growers Association, Manitoba Corn Growers Association, Oat and Barley Council of Ontario, Prairie Oat Growers Association, Western Barley Growers Association, and Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association.

For more information on the Grain Growers of Canada, please visit www.ggc-pgc.ca.

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