

May 28, 2018

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, M.P., P.C.
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Re: Possible work stoppage at Canadian Pacific Railway (CP)

Dear Prime Minister,

Grain farmers across Canada are finishing the 2018 planting season and see significant opportunity for the year ahead. Recent actions, including the passage of Bill C-49 and Canada's signing of the CPTPP have given grain farmers a sense of optimism that they can be drivers of the Canadian economy.

However, as farmers are working to get the 2018 crop in the ground they are facing growing concern about the possibility of a work stoppage at CP Rail. A service disruption would have devastating impact on hard working grain farmers who rely on CP Rail to get grain to customers and into export position. Your Government's actions with Bill C-49 have shown grain farmers that you understand how essential a functioning rail transportation system is to the grain sector. Grain farmers are still trying to recover from the backlog created by abysmal rail service over the last 6 months and a work stoppage would jeopardize any chance of salvaging the shipping season.

Grain farmers have been hopeful that collective bargaining would result in an outcome that avoided a work stoppage. In April we wrote to both CP management and the unions calling on them to negotiate in good faith towards a negotiated settlement, but unfortunately it appears more and more likely that this will not be possible.

That is why the thousands of middle class farm families that rely on rail to keep grain moving are asking you to be prepared to intervene if a work stoppage takes place. Minister Hajdu's last intervention averted a disruption and her ongoing engagement has been positive, but it is becoming clear that more may be needed. Grain farmers are asking that the Government be prepared to intervene with back-to-work legislation if all other tools have been exhausted and a work stoppage is inevitable.

Grain farmers support your Government's ambitious target of \$75 billion in exports, your investments in innovation and your commitment to increase value-added processing in Canada. However, without the ability to get product to market by rail, we will not be able to take advantage of those opportunities.

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Once again, thank you to you and your colleagues for your hard work creating the conditions for grain farmers to continue to succeed. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this and other important issues to the grain sector.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Nielsen", written over a light grey rectangular background.

Jeff Nielsen
President, Grain Growers of Canada

c.c.: Hon Patty Hajdu
Hon. Marc Garneau, Transport Canada
Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada