

March 10, 2021

The Honourable Filomena Tassi, M.P., P.C.
Minister of Labour
140 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0J9

The Honourable Omar Alghabra, M.P., P.C.
Minister of Transport
330 Sparks St
Ottawa ON
K1A 0N5

Dear Ministers:

As business and industry associations representing Canada's businesses that provide hundreds of thousands of jobs in almost every economic sector, we are gravely concerned about the possible threat of another labour stoppage at the Port of Montreal.

As the largest port in Eastern Canada and the only container port on the St. Lawrence River, the Port of Montreal is integral to the success of all sectors of the economy. It is a key link in supply routes to Eastern Canada and Ontario. The Port generates approximately \$2.6 billion in economic activity and sees about \$100 billion worth of goods pass through its docks every year. All economic sectors will be severely affected by a labour disruption, including food, medicines, automotive parts, and retail, among others.

Because of the looming threat of labour action, many businesses have been forced to divert cargo to other already congested transportation modes of the Canadian and American supply chains, which hampers the Port of Montreal's economic viability. The Port is central to Canada's economy for exporting and importing, and every day without an agreement is another day closer to a labour stoppage, which could paralyze economic activity and impede delivery of products essential to fighting COVID-19. Following the previous longshoremen's strike in August 2020, industry activity took three months to return to previous levels. A similar impact would be felt if there were a strike this spring.

Canada is already in the middle of a devastating economic downturn because of the COVID-19 pandemic. A labour disruption would make a bad problem worse for businesses and the tens of thousands of workers whose livelihoods rely on economic activity flowing through the port. A labour stoppage would aggravate backlogs in other shipping modes, including rail.

We strongly urge the federal government to use all tools at its disposal to facilitate a dialogue between the Maritime Employers Association and the longshoremen's union to arrive at a negotiated agreement prior to the expiration of the truce on March 21st.

Our associations would be happy to support any efforts by the federal government and would like to invite you and your officials to meet affected businesses and associations at a virtual roundtable.

Sincerely,

Hon. Perrin Beatty, P.C., O.C.
President and Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Chamber of Commerce

Ron Lemaire
President
Canadian Produce Marketing Association

Luke Chapman
Interim President
Beer Canada

Brian Kingston
President and Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers Association

Shannon Coombs
President
Canadian Consumer Specialty Products
Association

Carol McGlogan
President and Chief Executive Officer
Electro-Federation Canada

Dan Kelly
President and Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Federation of Independent
Business

Derek Nighbor
President and Chief Executive Officer
Forest Products Association of Canada

Ralph Suppa
President and General Manager
Canadian Institute of Plumbing and Heating

Sandy MacLeod
President & CEO
Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
Institute of Canada

Michael Graydon
Chief Executive Officer
Food, Health, and Consumer Products
Canada

Pierre Gratton
President and Chief Executive Officer
Mining Association of Canada

Bruce Rodgers
Executive Director
Canadian International Freight Forwarders
Association

David Wojcik
President and Chief Executive Officer
Mississauga Board of Trade

Dennis Darby
President and Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters

Diane J. Brisebois
President and Chief Executive Officer
Retail Council of Canada