

November 21, 2019

Jean-Jacques Ruest
President CN Rail
935 de La Gauchetière Street West
Montreal, Quebec
H3B 2M9

Dear Mr. Ruest

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is Canada's largest voluntary general farm organization, representing more than 38,000 farm family businesses across Ontario. These farm businesses form the backbone of a robust food system and rural communities with the potential to drive the Ontario economy forward.

Rail transport is critical to the orderly supply of farm inputs and delivery of farm production throughout Canada and to international ports. CN Rail strike events have disrupted the Ontario agricultural sector. The immediate critical concern is the interruption in propane supply and related price impacts. Propane is critical to ensure heating and ventilation are in place to maintain essential animal welfare. Supply interruptions have already begun across the province impacting perishable crop storage facilities and crop drying processes necessary to remove moisture from grains and oilseeds to ensure optimum quality is maintained during storage.

Due to the strike, propane distributors have informed farm customers that priority is centred on residential customers, limiting supply for livestock operations, and suspending supply for grain elevators. Several elevators have been forced to shut down grain drying operations due to a lack of propane.

Ontario's 2019 corn and soybean harvest is underway with high demand for drying a wetter than normal crop. Propane serves as an essential dryer fuel for most commercial and farm grain elevators that do not have access to natural gas. The potential for increased grain quality issues is substantial. Without available propane, farmers may have no choice but to leave crops in the field and risk negative financial implications.

Any disruption in propane supply and/or increased propane prices has an immediate impact for farmers, proper crop storage and risks animal health and welfare on many Ontario livestock and poultry operations. Without rail transport, for those that can arrange trucked propane, further trucking distances and longer drive times will increase costs.

While we note that concerned parties recognized the desire to avoid affecting public transport, the impacts in rural areas and to commercial sectors such as agriculture are significant. We have urged the federal government to take direct and appropriate actions to ensure that rail transportation of propane is resumed immediately. We urge CN management to work with the union and government to resolve this issue.

Sincerely,



Keith Currie
President