

November 20, 2019

The Honourable Marc Garneau
Minister of Transport
Transport Canada
330 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N5

Dear Minister Garneau:

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 and national economies forward.

Recent events regarding the CN rail strike have disrupted the Ontario propane supply and impacted pricing. Rail transport is critical to the orderly supply of propane. Propane is critical to ensure proper livestock heating and ventilation needed to maintain utmost animal welfare. Supply interruptions will also impact crop storage facilities and crop treatments such as grain drying.

Due to the strike, propane distributors are already informing farm customers that priority is centred on residential customers, limiting supply for livestock operations, and interrupting supply for grain elevators. Several grain elevators have been forced to shut down grain drying operations due to no supply of propane.

Ontario's 2019 corn harvest is underway with high demand for drying a wetter than normal crop. Corn moisture must be removed to allow for safe storage and marketability. 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 could be substantial.

Any disruption in propane supply and/or increase in propane price has a serious impact for grain farmers, crop drying and perishable crop storage, and risks livestock health and wellbeing at many Ontario livestock operations.

Without rail transport, for those that can find trucked propane, further trucking distances and longer drive times will add costs. The added cost will ultimately be passed on to buyers, like farmers.

The federal government must take direct and appropriate actions to ensure that rail transportation of propane is resumed immediately. The OFA would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this further with the government. Over the longer term, we know there are other options to address the interruption of reliable energy delivery including the expansion of access to natural gas pipeline infrastructure.

Sincerely,



Keith Currie
President

cc: The Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
The Honourable Filomena Tassi, Minister of Labour
The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Natural Resources
The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
The Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
The Honourable Greg Rickford, Ontario Minister of Energy
Mary Robinson, President, Canadian Federation of Agriculture
Markus Haerle, Chair, Grain Farmers of Ontario
Dave Battenham, CEO, Ontario Agri-Business Association