



February 15, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
 Office of the Prime Minister
 80 Wellington Street
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

Once again, a crisis is emerging in rural Ontario as a result of interrupted rail service. We, the undersigned, represent farmers and agri-businesses that live and work in rural communities across Ontario and we are writing to you to ask that you find a solution immediately to the disruption of rail service.

We recognize and acknowledge that Indigenous Canadians have fundamental issues that must be addressed in order to achieve full reconciliation. However, it will be through thoughtful, honest and sincere dialogue that such an outcome will be attained. Protests that have the potential to paralyze the Canadian economy are not helpful to that process.

The agri-food sector is the most significant driver of the Ontario economy – generating \$48 billion in GDP and employing over 837,000 Ontarians. In addition, hospitals, homes, farm families, farm animals, farm businesses and the food processing sector throughout rural Ontario are all at risk.

The rail stoppage is affecting everyone who relies on rail to provide essential goods and services to their community. Eastern Canada is facing propane shortages needed to meet heating requirements. Container movement of soybeans has ground to a halt. Ethanol plants have stopped accepting corn deliveries as there is no mechanism to move the ethanol out by rail. 70% of Canada's pork production is exported with the vast majority of that moving by rail to export position and this interruption is an immediate and severe economic impact. It will take weeks to recover from the days of disruptions that have already taken place. Medicine, heat for hospitals and homes, food and other supplies need to reach communities that rely on rail for the transportation of these essentials.

We need your help, now, we are asking you to find an immediate solution to the current disruption in rail service and work with us to develop solutions that will stop continual disruption to rail service in Canada.

Sincerely,

Joe Hill, President, Beef Farmers of Ontario
 Ed Benjamins, Chair, Chicken Farmers of Ontario
 Clarence Nywening, President, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario
 Scott Graham, Chair, Egg Farmers of Ontario
 Norman Beal, Chief Executive Officer, Food and Beverage Ontario
 Markus Haerle, Chair, Grain Farmers of Ontario
 Ryan Koeslag, Executive Vice-President/CEO, Mushrooms Canada
 Richard Smibert, President, Ontario Agri Business Association
 Mike Donnelly-Vanderloo, Chair, Ontario Bean Growers
 Bill Bears, Chair, Ontario Broiler, Hatching Egg & Chick Commission

Keith Currie, President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Eric Schwindt, Chair, Ontario Pork
Brian Ricker, Chair, Turkey Farmers of Ontario

cc:

The Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport; mintc@tc.gc.ca

The Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business Export Promotion and International Trade; mary.ng@international.gc.ca

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food; Marie-Claude.Bibeau@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Maryam Monsef, Minister of Rural Economic Development; Maryam.Monsef@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario; doug.fordco@pc.ola.org

The Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Ontario Minister of Agriculture & Food; ernie.hardeman@pc.ola.org

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