



May 21, 2024

The Honorable Ginette Brazeau
Chairperson
Canada Industrial Relations Board
40 Sparks Street
4th Floor West
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0X8

Re: Board File Number 037674-C

Dear Chairperson Brazeau and Members of the Board:

The National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA) thanks you for considering the impacts of lost rail service on the movements of food throughout Canada. Due to the large landmass, Canada is more dependent on rail service than most countries and the loss of rail service would be profound on its most rail dependent industries, such as agriculture.

The NGFA, established in 1896, consists of grain, feed, processing, exporting and other grain-related companies that operate more than 8,000 facilities handling Canadian and U.S. grains and oilseeds. Its membership includes grain elevators; feed and feed ingredient manufacturers; biofuels companies; grain and oilseed processors and millers; exporters; livestock and poultry integrators; and associated firms that provide goods and services to the nation's grain, feed and processing industry. Many of these firms rely on rail services that transit to and via Canada, which would lead to ripple effects across the entire industry.

The NGFA urges you to take action to avert a rail strike or lockout that would lead to shutdowns or slowdowns of rail-dependent facilities resulting in harmful consequences for Canada's agricultural producers and industry as well as domestic and global food security. The impact of a strike would be particularly severe as trucking is not a viable option for many agricultural shippers due to their high-volume needs and the long distances for many of the movements.

There is a sizable livestock industry that depends on rail to timely deliver corn and other feed grains, dried distillers grains, and further feed ingredients. There also are many facilities, such as biofuels operations, flour mills and other grain processors that require uninterrupted rail service. In the event of an interruption, they quickly run out of storage capacity and incur shortages of incoming raw materials. In addition, shutdowns and restarts of such facilities are complex operations, meaning that even a short-term disruption could stop production for several weeks and cost the Canadian economy.

The impact would go beyond the domestic population, as Canada is the world's largest exporter of canola and oats, third largest exporter of wheat, and fifth largest for barley. Canada's agricultural export facilities are primarily served by rail and a stoppage of rail

service would materially harm Canada's farmgate prices for commodities, Canada's ag shippers and exporters and its global customers.

An operational railroad is critical for agricultural production and food distribution, and we thank you for your responsiveness to this imminent supply chain issue and urge you to deem rail as an essential service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Seyfert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael J. Seyfert
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Grain and Feed Association