

**\*\*For Immediate Release\*\***

## **The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce Addresses Potential Rail Strike Impact on Local Economy**

Chatham-Kent, Ontario, August 19, 2024 – The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce is closely monitoring the potential rail strike and its implications for our community. “As a region serviced by the trunk lines of two major railways—Canadian National Railway (CN) and Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR)<sup>1</sup>—we recognize the critical role that rail transportation plays in our local economy. This is a critical time of year as the agricultural sector is in full swing with expectations of shipping perishable goods to destinations across Canada and abroad.” – B.J. Griffiths, Chair of the Board of Directors, Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce

### **Economic Impact**

Railroads are a vital link in our supply chain, facilitating the movement of goods across North America. CN, with its extensive east-west and north-south network, connects Chatham-Kent to ports on the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts, as well as to all three NAFTA nations.

CPR’s high-density mainline network serves major Canadian ports and cities, extending from Montreal to Vancouver and key centers in the U.S. Midwest and Northeast. Its international reach through alliances with other Class I railways provides access to the Pacific Northwest, the southern U.S., and Mexico.

A rail strike would disrupt freight transportation, affecting industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, and logistics. Estimates suggest that railroads handle approximately 40% of the nation’s freight annually, making their smooth operation crucial to our local businesses.

### **Chamber’s Call to Action**

The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce urges all stakeholders—government, labor unions, and rail operators—to engage in constructive dialogue. We emphasize the need for a fair resolution that balances workers’ rights with the economic well-being of our community.

Our businesses rely on efficient rail service, and any disruption could have far-reaching consequences. We encourage all parties to work collaboratively to prevent a prolonged strike.

## **The Chatham-Kent Chamber Joins Forces Across Canada Calling on the Government to Take Action**

The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce joins forces with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and over 125 associations and Chambers across Canada to immediately intervene and do everything necessary to avert a disruption in Canada’s Class I railways. In a letter addressed to The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, The Honourable Steven MacKinnon, Minister of Labour and Seniors and The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, Minister of Transport and Quebec Lieutenant representation from all sectors and size of business of Canada’s economy stress that concurrent or sequential work stoppages at both major railways will leave Canadians with access to fewer goods and

products, driving up prices and exacerbating affordability challenges. A failure to act swiftly will also put the livelihoods of millions of workers in jeopardy.

A disruption to our railway system will have an immediate impact on thousands of businesses from coast to coast and to commuters in several major urban centres and those travelling to those centres for business or vacation.

\*About Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce: \*

The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce serves as the recognized voice of visionary leadership for over 350 members and businesses in the Chatham-Kent community. Their mission is to champion business excellence by encouraging business relations, integrating business with the community, and fostering entrepreneurship. They aim to enhance economic prosperity and quality of life for local businesses. You can find them at 54 Fourth St, Chatham, ON N7M 2G21. For inquiries, you can reach them at (519) 352-7540 or via email at [info@chatham-kentchamber.ca](mailto:info@chatham-kentchamber.ca).

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Cell: (705) 989-4804



August 9, 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

The Honourable Steven MacKinnon, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Labour and Seniors  
Place du Portage Phase II  
165 de l'Hôtel-de-Ville Street  
Gatineau, Québec J8X 3X2

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Transport and Quebec Lieutenant  
330 Sparks Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N5

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers:

We are writing to urge you to immediately intervene and do everything necessary to avert a disruption in Canada's Class I railways.

A concurrent or sequential work stoppage at both major railways will leave Canadians with access to fewer goods and products, driving up prices and exacerbating affordability challenges. A failure to act swiftly will also put the livelihoods of millions of workers in jeopardy.

A disruption to our railway system will have an immediate impact on thousands of businesses from coast to coast and to commuters in several major urban centres. All of Canada's ports, logistics and warehouse operators, and suppliers will be affected, while a prolonged stoppage will quickly lead to shortages of supplies for numerous industries, forcing businesses to suspend their operations and furlough their employees. Factoring in the millions of Canadian jobs that would be impacted, the magnitude of the disruption is daunting.

Our international reputation and relationship with our trading partners is also at stake. Canada's railways transport \$380 billion worth of goods annually – that's over \$1 billion each day – and account for half of the country's exports. A prolonged railway strike will also surely weaken Canada's negotiating position in advance of the renewal of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement in 2026. A loss of confidence from our most important trading partner would take years to repair.

The uncertainty around the potential of a nationwide rail strike has already forced businesses across the country to adjust their operations (see Appendix).

We are respectfully asking that you safeguard the well-being of Canadians and the country's reputation as a reliable trading partner by ensuring that a disruption to our national railway system does not occur.

To support this effort, we would like to propose a meeting with you and a select group of association leaders as soon as possible. This meeting would provide an opportunity to discuss our concerns in detail and to explore how we, Canada's business community, can support the government in preventing any potential disruption.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Alberta Food Processors Association  
Aluminium Association of Canada  
Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association  
Animal Nutrition Association of Canada  
Association of Equipment Manufacturers  
Association of Footwear + Apparel Canada  
BC Food & Beverage  
Beer Canada  
British Columbia Construction Association  
British Columbia Trucking Association  
Business Council of British Columbia  
Business Council of Canada  
Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance  
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers  
Canadian Association of Recycling Industries  
Canadian Automobile Dealers Association  
Canadian Canola Growers Association  
Canadian Cattle Association  
Canadian Construction Association  
Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association  
Canadian Corrugated and Containerboard Association  
Canadian Federation of Agriculture  
Canadian Federation of Independent Business  
Canadian Fluid Power Association  
Canadian Food Exporters Association  
Canadian Franchise Association  
Canadian Fuels Association  
Canadian Home Builders' Association  
Canadian International Freight Forwarders Association  
Canadian Kitchen Cabinet Association  
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters  
Canadian Meat Council  
Canadian Paint and Coatings Association  
Canadian Pork Council

Canadian Produce Marketing Association  
Canadian Rental Association  
Canadian Steel Producers Association  
Canadian Sugar Institute  
Canadian Trucking Alliance  
Canola Council of Canada  
Cement Association of Canada  
Chamber of Marine Commerce  
Chemistry Industry Association of Canada  
Conseil de la transformation alimentaire du Québec  
Electro-Federation Canada  
Fenestration Canada  
Fertilizer Canada  
FETCO  
Food & Beverage Atlantic  
Food and Beverage Canada  
Food and Beverage Ontario  
Food & Beverage Manitoba  
Food, Health and Consumer Products of Canada  
Food Producers of Canada  
Forest Products Association of Canada  
Freight Management Association of Canada  
Global Automakers of Canada  
Global Cold Chain Alliance  
Grain Growers of Canada  
Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association of Canada  
I.E. Canada  
Independent Contractors and Businesses Association  
L'Association du camionnage du Québec  
Medtech Canada  
Mining Association of Canada  
National Maritime Group  
Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario  
New Car Dealers Association of B.C.  
Ontario Craft Brewers  
Pets Canada  
Private Motor Truck Council of Canada  
Pulse Canada  
Quebec Employers Council  
Quebec Hemp and Cannabis Industry Association  
Responsible Distribution Canada  
Retail Council of Canada  
Saskatchewan Mining Association  
Shipping Federation of Canada  
Southern Interior Construction Association  
Truck Training School Association of Ontario  
Western Canadian Shippers' Coalition  
Western Grain Elevator Association

Wheat Growers Association  
Wood Manufacturing Cluster of Ontario

Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce  
Alberta Chambers of Commerce  
Assiniboia Chamber of Commerce  
Atlantic Chamber of Commerce  
Battlefords & District Chamber of Commerce  
Burlington Chamber of Commerce  
Cambridge Chamber of Commerce  
Canadian Chamber of Commerce  
Cap-Acadie Chamber of Commerce  
Chamber of Commerce Brantford-Brant  
Chamber of Commerce for Greater Moncton  
Chatham Kent Chamber of Commerce  
Chetwynd Chamber of Commerce  
Cold Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Consort & District Chamber of Commerce  
Fort Nelson & District Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce  
Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce  
Hamilton Chamber of Commerce  
High River Chamber of Commerce  
London Chamber of Commerce  
Madoc & District Chamber of Commerce  
Manitoba Chambers of Commerce  
Mississauga Board of Trade  
North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce  
Port Hope & District Chamber of Commerce  
Prince George Chamber of Commerce  
Quebec's Federation of Chambers of Commerce  
Quinte West Chamber of Commerce  
Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce  
Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce  
Surrey Board of Trade  
Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce  
Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce  
Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce  
Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce  
Tumbler Ridge Chamber of Commerce  
Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Yorkton Chamber of Commerce