August 12, 2020.

Att. The Honorable Filomena Tassi
Minister of Labour
Filomena.Tassi@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca

Re: Strike at the Port of Montreal

Dear Minister Tassi,

We find ourselves writing to you once again, with regard to the deteriorating labour conditions at Canada’s second largest port, the Port of Montreal, between the Maritime Employers Association (MEA) and the Longshoremen’s Union CUPE Local 375. As previously mentioned, this action has a direct and significant impact to the Canadian economy and for the workers in many Canadian Industries.

We were seized by your recent comments made in the Montreal Gazette, on August 10, 2020. You stated that “Our government understands the importance of the Port of Montreal and its workers to the Canadian economy’. My colleague, the Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport, and I have reached out to both parties to convey our expectation that they focus their efforts on reaching an agreement and avoid further disruption. It is in reaching a negotiated agreement that normal functions can return at the Port, and anything that delays the bargaining process is disappointing and harmful to both the local and national economies."

This is not a normal year, where government officials can stand back and have “faith in the collective bargaining process”. This has been an outstanding issue since October 2018 and cannot be allowed to fester any longer.

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in the deepest economic downturn of our lifetimes. Trade in Canada has plummeted, while unemployment figures increase. Trade has been severely disrupted and a key challenge for government officials will be to lay the foundation for a strong, sustainable and economic recovery.

As the Minister of Labour, we urge you to assist in bringing negotiations to a successful and rapid conclusion, whether through mediation, binding arbitration or any other means available. Canadians must have certainty in our international marine transportation and in the labour forces at our ports.
Sincerely,

Bruce Rodgers       Executive Director, CIFFA

Julia Kuzeljevich   Public Affairs Manager, CIFFA

Canadian International Freight Forwarders Association (CIFFA)

The Canadian International Freight Forwarders Association (CIFFA) represents some 260 regular member firms from the largest of global multi-national freight forwarding firms to small and medium sized Canadian companies. CIFFA member companies employ tens of thousands of highly skilled international trade and transportation specialists. As a vital component of Canada’s global supply chain, CIFFA member companies orchestrate the movement of goods around the world. International freight forwarders are the foremost experts in cargo transportation solutions and an essential partner in advancing the Canadian economy and the economic prosperity of Canadians.

C.C. The Right Honorable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
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The Honorable Marc Garneau
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Mr. Francois Legault
Premier of Quebec
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Mr. Doug Ford
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