

June 9, 2023.

Att. The Honourable Seamus O'Regan  
Minister of Labour  
seamus.oregan@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister,

We are writing to bring to your attention the extremely serious implications of the possible failure of negotiations between the [International Longshore and Warehouse Union](#) and the [British Columbia Maritime Employers Association](#).

As you will know, the parties participated in a conciliation process which has now ended and they are currently in a 21-day "cooling off" period. There is not much evidence of coolness, unfortunately, and the union authorized a strike vote on June 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.

Our organization, the Canadian International Freight Forwarders, [CIFFA](#), includes all parts of the supply chain: the freight forwarders, the drayage truckers, warehouses and customs brokers. Other than a return of a public health emergency such as we endured in recent years, it's hard to imagine a more disruptive event to Canada's economy at this time than a work stoppage in our ports which will delay imports and exports at significant costs to consumers.

When he met the Parliamentary Committee in 2021, the Minister of Transport estimated the impact of a shutdown of the port of Montreal as follows:

"It is estimated that the cost to the Canadian economy of a full shutdown of the Port could reach between \$40M and \$100M per week." But Montreal is not as large a port as Vancouver. Moreover, that stoppage did not impact grain and oil products.

The continued challenges south of our border, where labour actions at ports on the West Coast have forced the closure of some terminals, disrupting supply chains and creating instability and uncertainty, make it even more difficult for Canadian businesses to export or import. It's frustrating that instead of taking advantage of the unreliability of U.S. ports, to the benefit of workers and firms, we are instead imitating them.

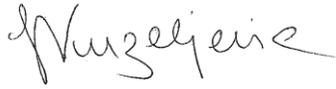
We urge you and your government to take every appropriate action to forestall a stoppage of service in the West Coast ports, and to be ready to act should a stoppage occur.

Sincerely,



Bruce Rodgers

Executive Director, CIFFA



Julia Kuzeljevich      Director, Policy and Regulatory Affairs, CIFFA

**CC:**

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