

February 14, 2020

Via Email: pm@pm.gc.ca, justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

The Right Honourable Justice Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

I write to express our grave concerns regarding the growing numbers of rail blockades across Canada that threaten the Canadian economy and could result in the layoff of thousands of our members across Canada.

Our union's members include thousands of Canadians who work in the rail sector, including members of Indigenous ancestry, who work hard every day to support their families, who support Indigenous rights and who now face uncertainty and potential job losses. We also have thousands of members whose jobs depend on commodity supply chains that rely on the Canadian railway transportation network.

Peaceful demonstration is fundamental to our democracy in Canada. It is a principle that is valued by the United Steelworkers (USW) and our members across the country. The USW also supports reconciliation and socio-economic justice that meets the standards and principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In our view, the root cause of this current crisis is that successive governments in Canada have repeatedly ignored their responsibilities on reconciliation with Indigenous nations and peoples. For years federal governments have paid lip service to dialogue and reconciliation, but have failed to take the profound and meaningful action that is required to achieve true reconciliation.

This abject failure is reflected in the current protests and rail blockades across Canada and the resulting social tensions and economic volatility confronting all Canadians.

As a result, we are writing to ask you to take personal responsibility for this file and meet with all stakeholders to defuse the tensions in this conflict, find a resolution and demonstrate a genuine commitment to reconciliation. The Canadian economy, and the livelihoods of many of our members, depends on the Canadian railway system and we urge you to intervene in this dispute.

Yours sincerely,



Ken Neumann
National Director for Canada
United Steelworkers

KN/slq

cc. Marc Garneau – Minister of Transport