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Mr. Greg Edwards
General Chairman
Teamsters Canada Rail Conference
101 – 10820 24th Street SE
Calgary, AB
T2Z 4C9

Mr. Tom Doherty
Alberta Provincial Legislative Chairperson
Teamsters Canada Rail Conference
101 – 10820 24th Street SE
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Dear General Chairman Edwards and Chairperson Doherty:

Thank you for contacting us regarding confusion around the application of Canada's COVID-19 self-isolation request for rail workers that are critical to the movement of goods across the Canada-U.S. border.

The Government of Canada implemented a general request that travelers entering Canada self-isolate for a period of 14 days to help slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The Government also stated that the movement of goods, and the preservation of cross-border supply chains, are critical to Canada's COVID-19 response. For this reason, the government created an exemption for transportation workers, including those in the rail industry, which states:

“an exemption to the request to self-isolate for 14 days should be provided to workers who are essential to the movement of goods and people...this exemption would apply to: healthy workers in the trade and transportation sector who are important for the movement of goods and people across the border, such as truck drivers and crew on any plane, train or marine vessel crossing the border.”¹

CP interpreted this exemption to apply to workers critical to the operation of the railway, not just to those crew members who cross the Canada-U.S. border as part of their duties. We were supported in this position in discussions with government officials. We see, however, that Brigitte Diogo of Transport Canada has since advised you that the exemption should not apply to a

¹ Government of Canada: Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Travel advice. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>. Accessed: March 18, 2020.

worker returning from a vacation or a personal trip to the U.S. Thank you for sharing that communication with us.

In an unprecedented health crisis, such as we are facing with COVID-19, there are going to be good faith differences of interpretation. In light of this evolving situation, CP has revised its position and will be compelling all workers who return from trips outside of Canada after the government issued the isolation request on March 13, 2020, to self-isolate for a 14 day period, regardless of whether or not they are exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19. We believe this is both the right action to take at this time, and that it supports the position that Transport Canada has taken.

As we are all well aware, it is imperative that supply-chains continue functioning to ensure grocery stores and pharmacies are re-stocked, essential goods remain available to consumers, and grain moves to export markets to support our farmers. Both Prime Minister Trudeau and President Trump have made it clear that the Canada-U.S. border must remain open to trade and commerce. Critical supplies, including food, cleaning products, medicine, fuel oil and propane, to name a few, must continue to move by rail and truck to allow Canadians to fight this crisis. We will continue to engage the Minister of Transport and Transport Canada to ensure appropriate exemptions are in place to allow critical transportation workers to continue to do their jobs, provided they are healthy and safe.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,



Mark Redd
Executive Vice-President Operations

c.c.: The Honourable Filomena Tassi, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Labour

The Honourable Marc Garneau, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Transport

The Honourable Bill Morneau, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Finance

Mr. Scott MacDonald
Senior Vice President – Engineering, Mechanical & Procurement
Canadian Pacific

Mr. Myron Becker
Chief Labour Officer
Canadian Pacific