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July 7, 2023

Rob Ashton
President – ILWU Canada
president@ilwu.ca

RE: B.C. Port Strike

Dear Rob Ashton:

Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) is Manitoba's general farm policy organization, providing a unified voice for farmers on issues that affect agriculture. KAP represents and promotes the interests of over 4,400 farmer members and 19 commodity associations. KAP is writing to express our concern regarding the current labour dispute between the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada (ILWU) and the British Columbia Maritime Employers Association (BCMEA). KAP is requesting that both parties find an acceptable solution to end this ongoing strike as soon as possible.

The West Coast ports represent a key export avenue in delivering Manitoba agricultural product abroad. The current strike has resulted in the disruption of container movement at these ports. Pulse and livestock producers rely heavily on containers to market their product to reach destinations across the globe. Furthermore, these ports are used heavily by potash exporters to deliver this key ingredient in fertilizer for use on crops outside Canada.

KAP has concerns that a prolonged strike could impact a producer's cash flow considering that harvest is fast approaching. Restrictions in cash flow would hamper a farmer's ability to pay bills and purchase inputs for the next crop year. Furthermore, demurrage costs and delays created by this strike would ultimately be passed on to the farmer. All these factors impact the reputation of the Canadian brand with our customers. "Reliability" is a key component of the Canadian brand.

The current strike is impacting an already fragile supply chain system. The longshore workers play an indispensable role in Canada's supply chain. We are asking that continued negotiations take place between ILWU and BCMEA that will result in an acceptable agreement to end the current strike.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Brenna Mahoney'.

Brenna Mahoney
General Manager, Keystone Agricultural Producers Inc.