



**FREDERICTON  
CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE**  
— The Voice of Business —

364 York Street, Suite 200  
Fredericton, NB  
E3B 3P7



21 February 2020

Jenica Atwin, MP, Fredericton  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Dear MP Atwin,

**Re: Ongoing Rail and Infrastructure Blockades**

We are writing today to express our growing concerns about the negative impacts of the current rail and infrastructure blockades taking place in various parts of the country. These blockades are creating severe problems for public services, Canadian businesses, workers and their families. A rail disruption of this magnitude constitutes an emergency for the Canadian economy.

When the blockades began, we had hoped for a swift and mutually acceptable resolution to the situation, but as time passes the negative impacts on our economy and public services are exponentially exacerbated. Each additional day rail lines are disrupted requires at least three or four days for supply chains to recover.

We support the efforts of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Atlantic Chamber of Commerce calling on the federal government to work urgently with the provinces and territories, Indigenous leaders and law enforcement authorities to bring an end to the ongoing disruptions and restore normal services without further delay.

The blockades have already directly affected the employment of hundreds of rail workers, are negatively impacting businesses in our region from all industries and cutting off Atlantic Canada from critical goods such as propane, thus threatening public safety. This week there are now news reports of other consumer goods such as groceries not getting to our Region.

Furthermore, this is not exclusively a domestic issue. Through continued inaction, the Canadian government is sending the wrong message to global investors that critical pieces of our economy and transportation infrastructure can be brought to a halt at a moment's notice. We are not in a position to prescribe the appropriate course of action to resolve the situation, but an indefinite stalemate wherein illegal blockades are affecting jobs and impacting safety cannot be the answer.

More broadly, we are very concerned about the situation's impacts on relationships with indigenous communities. We share governments' commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Many businesses have long-standing, respectful relationships with Indigenous communities. The Canadian business



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community supports the economic and social imperative of ensuring Indigenous peoples have the same tools to benefit from economic activity as everyone else. The longer the situation drags on, the potential damage to these relationships grows.

We appreciate that the matter is complex and ultimately a longer-term resolution is required through dialogue, relationship building and a clearer path to resource development that respects the legal rights of all parties. In the short term we need the federal and provincial governments to provide the leadership required to navigate the situation and get our economy moving again for the benefit of all Canadians.

Sincerely,

Karen Grant  
Owner, Kiers Marketing  
President, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce

Krista Ross  
CEO, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce

cc: Hon. Blaine Higgs, Premier, Province of New Brunswick  
cc: Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, MP, Beauséjour  
cc: Serge Cormier, MP, Acadie-Bathurst  
cc: René Arseneault, MP, Madawaska-Restigouche  
cc: Pat Finnigan, MP, Miramichi-Grand Lake  
cc: Ginette Petitpas-Taylor, MP, Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe  
cc: Wayne Long, MP, Saint John-Rothesay  
cc: Rob Moore, MP, Fundy Royal  
cc: John Williamson, MP, New Brunswick Southwest  
cc: Richard Bragdon, MP, Tobique-Mactaquac  
cc: Perrin Beatty, President and CEO, Canadian Chamber of Commerce  
cc: Sheri Somerville, CEO, Atlantic Chamber of Commerce