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Premier Tim Houston

Dear Premier Houston,

We write to you regarding a new labour dispute involving 239 Unifor members in Nova Scotia.

Less than eight hours into the Unifor Local 100 strike at Autoport in Eastern Passage, the employer, CN Rail, brought in scabs. Our union can only interpret this as a blatant attempt by CN Rail to disrupt the legal strike and undermine our members' constitutional right to bargain and reach a fair collective agreement.

We want you to know that Unifor has been bargaining in good faith through the entire process. The company, however, had planned to use replacement workers – and hired them – well before talks broke off, showing CN Rail's contempt for the bargaining process.

The three longest disputes in Unifor's history involved the use of replacement workers.

While the incidence rate is low, the level of impact that scab labour has is high, in terms of how this practice increases duration of the dispute, and its negative consequences on labour relations.

CN Rail's Autoport has been blatant in its use of scabs, saying plainly and publicly that this is part of their "contingency plan" to keep their operations moving.

This aggressive, pre-planned action against our members' right to bargain and strike effectively takes advantage of provincial laws in Nova Scotia that do not explicitly ban the use of replacement workers. CN Rail's opposition to the current federal anti-replacement workers bill (Bill C-58) and free collective bargaining in the rail sector in Canada is well documented.

We call on you to recognize that workers in Nova Scotia deserve the ability to collectively bargain fair contracts that help support themselves and their families, free from the threat posed by the employers' use of scabs that only drag-out strike and worsen an already difficult situation.

While Bill C-58 makes its way into law at the federal level, anti-scab legislation is needed at the provincial level across Canada because the use of scabs during a labour dispute:

- Undermines workers' constitutionally protected right to bargain.
- Undermines workers' constitutional right to strike effectively.
- Prolongs labour disputes by six times or more.
- Removes the only economic pressure workers have in negotiating with employers.
- Increases conflict on picket lines.
- Jeopardizes workplace safety and the safety of all those involved.
- De-stabilizes labour relations and fractures workplace morale.
- Removes incentives for employers to negotiate and settle fair contracts.

Our union has long advocated for the adoption of anti-scab legislation at all levels, and we invite you to consult our publication called [Fairness on the Line: the case for anti-scab legislation in Canada](#).

We respectfully request a meeting as soon as possible to discuss the strike at Autoport and the importance of getting a fair deal for Unifor Local 100 members.



Lana Payne
Unifor National President



Jennifer Murray
Unifor Atlantic Regional Director

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