

October 18, 2022

SENT VIA EMAIL

The Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
Finance Minister of Canada
Chrystia.Freeland@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, P.C., M.P.
Labour Minister of Canada
seamus.oregan@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion
Carla.Qualtrough@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Minister Chrystia Freeland, Minister Seamus O'Regan and Minister Carla Qualtrough,

Re: Urgent request to help Syncreon Automotive workers in Windsor, Ontario

Today, I write amidst growing concern for Unifor members facing a workplace closure at Syncreon Automotive in Windsor, Ontario, a supplier to Stellantis' Windsor Assembly Plant.

In June of 2022, Stellantis announced its intentions to insource all work performed by Syncreon by October 31, 2022, putting 298 workers out of work. Last week, Syncreon notified these same employees that there was no longer work available, accelerating the timeline.

These Unifor members have been laid-off for a total of 72 weeks since the beginning of the pandemic, and have been greatly affected by automotive supply chain shortages and ensuing production stoppages at Windsor Assembly. During that period, the Syncreon workers utilized government COVID-19 relief measures such as the Canada Recovery Benefit (CERB) and relaxed EI qualifying rules. Although, many members had to take out loans and increase debt loads due to the drastic decrease in their income during this period.

Now that the temporary EI measures have expired (including the standardized qualifying threshold of 420 hours, and the suspension of allocating severance), Syncreon workers are greatly disadvantaged.

The above-mentioned EI temporary measures directly affect all workers at Syncreon Automotive. Some workers will not have enough hours to qualify for EI (with having only worked 200 hours between May 1 to October 31, 2022), given that new regional qualifying thresholds are set at 560 hours in Windsor and 700 hours in Huron (Essex County). To make matters worse, the workers that are able to qualify for EI, will now have their severance allocated to their EI claims despite Unifor negotiating an enhanced severance package for these workers to pay off previous debt incurred throughout the pandemic. This is wrong, as Unifor is firm that severance should be treated as money earned by previous labour, and should not be eaten up (or allocated) at the front end of an EI claim prior to monies being issued to the worker.

Unifor local 195 (representing members at Syncreon Automotive) have met several times with staff from your offices. Those meetings have not resulted in assistance for these members in need.

I write today to request that all workers at Syncreon Automotive not have their severance allocated (such as was done prior to September 25, 2022).

This would greatly assist these members who are under undue stress at no fault of their own. Our union feels this is an appropriate request since the plant closure announcement happened in June of this year, and the termination notices were given prior to the expiration of EI temporary measures.

Please contact Unifor National Staff Representative, Erin Harrison at erin.harrison@unifor.org, if you have any questions.

I look forward to your prompt response to this urgent request.

In solidarity,



LANA PAYNE
National President

LP/EH/bmkklope343

cc [Irek Kusmierczyk](#), Parliamentary Secretary & Member of Parliament for Windsor—Tecumseh
[Brian Masse](#), Member of Parliament for Windsor West
[Chris Lewis](#), Member of Parliament for Essex
[Roxanne Dubois](#), Unifor Executive Assistant to the President
[Shane Wark](#), Unifor Assistant to the National Officers
[Angelo DiCaro](#), Unifor Director of Research Department

[Josh Coles](#), Unifor Director of Membership Mobilization & Political Action
[Erin Harrison](#), Unifor National Representative
[Theresa Farao](#), Unifor National Representative
[Emile Nabbout](#), Unifor local 195 President
[Robert Kennedy](#), Unifor local 195 Vice-President
[Mike Borvic](#), Unifor local 195 Chairperson at Syncreon Automotive
[Linda Poho](#), Unifor local 195 Action Centre Coordinator
[Lennie Clinansmith](#), Unifor local 195