



Unifor grieves VIA Rail's change to the Rail Pass

Sisters and brothers,

On September 5, 2014, without any forewarning or dialogue with the union, VIA Rail released an *EXECUTIVE MESSAGE* which stated, “VIA Rail employees will keep their passes, but rather than allowing them to travel for free, the passes will allow them to take advantage of a significant discount on our various routes and in our different classes of service.”

This *Executive Message*, once implemented, will have negative effects on all our VIA Rail members, retirees, spouses and dependants from coast to coast. Our members across the country are rightly raising concerns with VIA Rail's intentions to change the terms and conditions of employment, moreover during the closed period of a collective agreement.

It should be noted that Yves Desjardins-Siciliano, President and Chief Executive Officer made this announcement without any prior dialogue, notice or agreement with the union. This lack of consideration, speaks sadly of the new administration's level of understanding of the importance of developing and fostering a positive labour relations climate.

To this day, the President and Chief Executive Officer has yet to officially approach the union on this subject for dialogue.

At the insistence of the union, a meeting was held with VIA Rail Labour Relations on September 29, 2014 in which the corporation steadfastly maintained its position regarding the planned unilateral changes to the Pass Policy. The union was equally adamant that a unilateral change to the Pass Policy was a violation of the collective agreement and perhaps the Canada Labour Code; especially during the closed period of the collective agreement.

The corporation, adding insult to injury also suggested that their decision to unilaterally change the Pass Policy is not a grievable or arbitrable matter.

The union disagrees with the corporation's position and has filed grievances across the country. The union will also consider other available options moving forward.

We will keep you updated on this important fight back and any future progress.

In solidarity,

Council 4000 & Local 100

BS\sd cope343