



President
François Laporte
Président

March 23, 2018

The Right Hon. Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

The first round of talks with the Mercosur bloc of nations ends today. I wanted to take this opportunity to let you know that signing the CPTPP, and beginning Mercosur talks without consulting our union, shattered our confidence in the government's commitment to a "progressive" trade agenda.

Teamsters represent close to 125,000 workers in Canada all industries. We understand that our economy and our members' livelihoods depend on the free flow of goods.

While we are not opposed to trade, we recognize that there is such a thing as a bad trade agreement. The CPTPP is one such example. Canada made an unacceptable compromise by agreeing to its weak labour provisions. On labour issues, your CPTPP is in fact weaker than what Stephen Harper had negotiated in the TPP.

Canada undermined its position on labour rights at the NAFTA negotiations table by agreeing to the CPTPP. We cannot demand a strong labour chapter in negotiations with the United States and Mexico, and at the same time agree to a weak labour chapter in the CPTPP.

Mercosur and all future trade agreements will need to include something the CPTPP does not have: a strong and enforceable labour chapter, which recognizes that wages and working conditions always affect trade. Violating the labour chapter would need to carry consequences that are at least as strong as those that protect commercial interests.

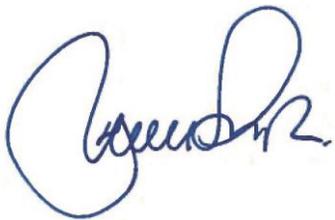
Moreover, no further trade agreement should be signed without first studying the impact on jobs. The federal government made no attempt to analyze potential job losses stemming from the CPTPP. With Mercosur, we urge you conduct appropriate economic modelling. It is wrong to assume trade agreements will not harm the livelihoods of at least some Canadians.

Talks with Mercosur must be open and transparent. Stephen Harper's secretive approach to TPP negotiations made Canadians rightly suspicious about trade agreements.

Finally, our union represents workers in the transportation, dairy, and apparel industries who may be affected by ongoing NAFTA modernization talks. We would ask that the government proactively inform us if these issues arise at Mercosur talks.

The decision to sign the CPTPP, without consultation and without a mandate from the population, was an unacceptable mistake. Regularly consulting civil society and labour unions on Mercosur will go a long way to help rebuild lost trust.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Harper", with a large, stylized initial "S" that loops around the rest of the name.

FL : kt

cc. The Hon. François-Philippe Champagne, P.C., M.P., Minister of International Trade
The Hon. Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs