



VANCOUVER and DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL



April 8, 2020

YVR Board of Directors
c/o Craig Richmond
President and CEO, Vancouver Airport Authority

VIA Email: craig_richmond@yvr.ca

Dear Mr. Richmond,

Subject: Protecting YVR Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

I am writing on behalf of the Vancouver and District Labour Council, representing approximately 60,000 public and private sector union members in the Vancouver area. Several months ago, our Council established a YVR Joint Union Committee in order to bring together unions representing workers at the airport.

At our most recent meeting we turned our full attention to the matter of YVR's COVID-19 response and the impacts on workers resulting from this horrible pandemic.

There are many areas of concern. Firstly, as you are of course aware, there have been and will likely continue to be many job losses as a result of this crisis. We understand that the response of the Federal Government to this is still developing, and there continues to be many questions.

However, what is critical in that response, and in the response of employers, is that working people and jobs are put front and centre. For us, this includes both direct employees and contract workers. As a starting point, we encourage the Airport Authority to reach out to all its stakeholders and contracted companies to have them apply for the 75% wage subsidy offered by the Federal Government in order to minimize the number of workers facing layoffs and to retain the qualified and security cleared personnel they have.

We also have several concerns about the conditions in place for those who do remain on the job during the pandemic. In particular, we would call upon the Airport Authority to ensure the following:

- Sufficient cleaning of facilities and work areas;

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- Transparency with unions representing YVR workers with regards to cases of COVID-19 and potential exposures. While acknowledging that of course personal information cannot be disclosed but maintaining that general information about potential exposures is critical to health and safety;
- Increased measures to ensure physical distancing;
- Establishment of procedures and appropriate training regarding what to do in the event of encountering a person exhibiting symptoms;
- Sufficient and appropriate Personal Protective Equipment for all frontline workers, and installation of plexiglass shields as has been done in grocery stores and other worksites;
- Stationing of staff to watch for passengers exhibiting symptoms both at points of arrival and departure.

We have also learned that some cleaning staff are facing layoff and while we understand these are not unionized workers, we are concerned about the impacts of this on those workers and also on the health and safety of the airport as a worksite. We would ask for disclosure from the Airport Authority about the layoffs and how appropriate cleaning will be ensured.

Thank you for your attention, we look forward to hearing back on these important issues.

Sincerely,



Stephen von Sychowski
President, VDLC

Letter also endorsed by:

International Associations of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Local Lodge 16

MoveUP

Public Service Alliance Local 20221 (Union of Canadian Transportation Employees)

Teamsters Local 213

United Association of Journeymen & Apprentices of the Plumbing & PipeFitting Industry Local 170

UNITE HERE Local 40

cc: VDLC Executive Board