



VANCOUVER and DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL



May 21, 2020

VIA Email: The Honorable Marc Garneau, MLA, Minister of Transport –
mintc@tc.gc.ca

The Honorable Bill Morneau, MLA, Minister of Finance –
bill.morneau@canada.ca

Dear Minister,

Subject: Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility (LEEFF) and Protecting Workers

I write you today on behalf of the Vancouver and District Labour Council, representing approximately 60,000 private and public sector union members in the City of Vancouver and surrounding municipalities and jurisdictions including Vancouver International Airport (YVR).

Amongst our affiliated union locals are several organizations which represent workers at YVR, and other airports across the country. We have been following the announcements regarding the Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility (LEEFF). We understand that large Airport Authorities will be able to access LEEFF to obtain bridge financing during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

We know that, to protect taxpayers and workers, the LEEFF program will assess the employment, tax, and economic activity of a prospective funding recipient in Canada before providing loans.

We are happy to see the conditions that are being attached to this financing, however these appear to be quite limited in nature. It is certainly of critical importance that the financing must be conditional on respecting existing collective agreements and protecting pensions. However, working people, their families, and their unions, also need transparency around the expectations the government has on employment.

Airport Authorities have already received rent relief through the end of 2020. They are asking the Federal Government for more liquidity, delays on implementing new federal regulations, suspension of all federal excise and carbon taxes, extended rent relief into 2021 and perhaps beyond, and other sources of funding and relief.

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The Canadian Airlines Council recently wrote an op-ed in *The Hill Times* citing the need to protect the livelihoods of airport staff – including those working for on-airport contractors such as food & beverage and retail concessions, aviation-related services such as ground handling, security, parking, car-rentals, and other services catering to passengers.

We agree that protecting the jobs and livelihoods of these workers is of the utmost importance. That is why it is critical that the government acts quickly to implement conditions on LEEFF, or any other sectoral bailout package, to ensure the protection of workers and their jobs.

We call for such conditions to include a requirement that if Airport Authorities re-bid contracts during retraction and recovery, including airport concessions and other service such as custodial, fueling services or ground handling, all incoming contractors must be treated as successor employers.

For example, thousands of contracted airport concession workers work under operating leases. These leases are likely to expire and change hands during the protracted downturn. Workers who would otherwise be poised to return to work through the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) or recall will face another upheaval when concession operator contracts expire.

During a pandemic, the Federal Government must ensure that Airport Authorities do not allow a race to the bottom that prevents workers from keeping their jobs. Airport Authorities set the terms of leases and contracts and can reduce uncertainty facing contracted workers by agreeing to this easy and non-economic fix.

Yours truly,



Stephen von Sychowski
President, VDLC

cc: **YVR Joint Union Committee**
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