

Vancouver & District Labour Council



May 28, 2020

The Honourable John Horgan, MLA
Premier of the Province of British Columbia
West Annex, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

VIA Email: premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier Horgan,

Re: Airport Authorities and Pandemic Relief

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). This letter is also endorsed by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Local Lodge 16, MoveUP, Public Service Alliance of Canada BC Region, Union of Canadian Transportation Employees (PSAC Local 20221), and UNITE HERE Local 40.

Amongst our affiliated union locals are several organizations which represent workers at YVR. Many of the over 24,000 workers who work on Sea Island are union members and, like workers across our economy, many have been hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have of course been following the Federal Government announcements regarding the Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility (LEEFF). We understand that airports are largely considered to be the domain of the Federal Government, however it is entirely possible that YVR and/or other employers based on Sea Island may seek government assistance through the Provincial Government as the pandemic continues and air travel remains substantially reduced. The same is equally true of other Airport Authorities (AA's) across the province.

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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 like food & beverage and retail concessions, aviation-related services like 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 we are calling on government to require the protection of workers and their jobs as a condition to receiving financial aid.

We call for such conditions to include a requirement that if AAs re-bid contracts during retraction and recovery, including airport concessions and other services such as custodial, fueling services or ground handling, all incoming contractors must agree to 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, we must do all we can to ensure that AA's do not allow a race to the bottom that prevents workers from keeping their jobs. AA's set the terms of leases and contracts and can reduce uncertainty facing contracted workers by agreeing to this easy, and non-economic fix. Both the Federal and Provincial Governments have the power to require this in any agreements for the provision of financial aid.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Yours Truly,



Stephen von Sychowski
President, VDLC

cc: VDLC Executive Board, YVR Joint Union Committee
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