



News Release

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Campaign launched against Conservative Bill that will cost Thunder Bay one hundred jobs

(Thunder Bay) Local Canadian Grain Commission workers and their supporters are launching a campaign to stop legislation that will gut the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) and cost the Thunder Bay area one hundred jobs.

The campaign is aimed principally at local Conservative MP, Joe Comuzzi, who has been silent on the issue in spite of repeated invitations to join with others to stand up for our community.

At issue is the elimination of inspection and weighing services and regulatory oversight of grain shipments proposed in Bill C-39 which is currently before the House of Commons. If Bill C-39 becomes law, Thunder Bay will take a significant economic hit and grain producers, consumers and the grain sector as a whole will face a serious threat.

The end to "inward" inspection and weighing and the elimination of the CGC's bonding program will put producers at a disadvantage when dealing with grain companies. Grain Commission inspection also serves to grade grains and identify and eliminate dangerous contaminants or bio hazards from the supply. Without these inspections both human health and Canada's international reputation as a high quality producer will be at risk.

Despite repeated requests, workers whose jobs are in jeopardy have yet to meet with local Conservative Member of Parliament Joe Comuzzi. In a letter to Comuzzi on March 3rd, Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) regional representative Judith Monteith - Farrell wrote, "As you know, these changes will result in the loss of 90 to 100 high paying jobs in Thunder Bay. The negative impact of this loss will ripple through our local economy with serious consequences. I am taking the unusual step of hand-delivering this letter to your constituency office out of a sense of frustration. "

In a subsequent meeting with Mr. Comuzzi's assistant, the workers were told that their Member of Parliament would not be available for at least another two and one half weeks.

"If the loss of one hundred jobs and a direct threat to the grains trade which represents three quarters of the total shipments through the Port of Thunder

Bay doesn't qualify for the attention of a local MP, I can't imagine what would," said Don Beese, President of local 30 of the Agriculture Union - PSAC.

"The Union is asking the people of Thunder Bay to join us in demanding that Mr. Comuzzi stand up to his own government's attempt to gut the Canadian Grain Commission," added Beese.

A campaign website launched today at grainaction.ca will direct messages from the public to Mr. Comuzzi and the Conservative Government.

Bill C-39 will also deal a major blow to the Canadian grain economy as a whole. Experts expect that if C-39 becomes law it will undermine the Canadian Wheat Board and help to shift the flow of grain away from east-west, with Thunder Bay and its port in a key role, to a north-south trade pattern.

When it introduced Bill C-39, the Conservative Government ignored the unanimous advice of an all-party House of Commons Committee which called for further analysis and study before proceeding with any changes to the Canadian Grain Commission.

Local 30 of the Agriculture Union - PSAC represents people who work at the Canadian Grain Commission in Thunder Bay.

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