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GREG PRETTY
President

JASON SPINGLE
Secretary-Treasurer

December 1, 2023

Honourable Seamus O'Regan
Minister of Labour
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Minister O'Regan,

We are writing further to 'Enhancing Employment Insurance Supports for Seasonal Workers' component of the federal 2023 Fall Economic Statement announced on November 21st. As noted in our November 27th [Media Release](#), the measure falls short of providing meaningful support for seasonal workers, most especially with the exclusion of fish harvesters and the continuance of the reduced EI divisor.

While the extension of the pilot program will secure 4-additional weeks of benefits for seasonal workers that meet eligibility criteria, it does not address the need for restoring monthly benefit amounts under the longstanding divisor of 14 for Economic Region 2 which is the core of the issue. These 4 additional weeks just elongate the suffering of another month of financial vulnerability. There is also great disappointment among the almost 9,000 owner-operators and crew members who, despite being cited in the address as well as the 141-page Statement, are shut out altogether from the Seasonal Worker pilot program.

As you know, our Union has dedicated several concurrent months to educate and emphasize the need for relief measures in various mediums to you and your staff, including the preparation and presentation of a detailed proposal that outlined the precarious nature of the circumstances that workers engaged in the fishery have weathered in 2023. These circumstances were the symptoms of global recessionary pressures that could not have been forecasted. The unresponsiveness of federal government to any of the key areas of support cited in the [Economic Support Proposal](#) have been critically aggravated by the failure of the federal EI system to function as the safety-net it is intended to be. Then, desperately needed temporary enhanced support does not include the very prime producers that have felt these cumulative economic effects most acutely.

Our members remain rightfully outraged, and in response, we are requesting a meeting to be organized as quickly as can be accommodated that will allow our elected representatives to voice their concerns directly to you and your senior staff. This meeting will include FFAW leadership, Executive Board, as well as members of the FFAW Inshore and Industrial-Retail-Offshore Councils, who deserve to be heard in earnest on the

impacts to their households, their enterprises, and the negative impact on the labour market for our industry. And in turn, they deserve to hear directly as to why they cannot be supported appropriately to avoid significant loss.

We look forward to a timely response.

Sincerely,


Signed by Greg Pretty (2023/12/01)
Verify with verifio.com or Adobe Reader.



Greg Pretty
President, FFAW-Unifor

CC: Honourable Gudie Hutchings, Minister of Rural Economic Development Canada
Churence Rogers, MP for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity
Ken McDonald, MP for Avalon
Yvonne Jones, MP for Labrador
Joanne Thompson, MP for St. John's East
Pierre Laliberté, Commissioner for Workers, CEIC