

July 11, 2023

The Honourable David Eby
Premier of British Columbia
PO BOX 9041 STN
Victoria, B.C. V8W9E1

Sent Via Email: premier@gov.bc.ca

Subject: The Impact of Port Disruptions on B.C. Farmers and Ranchers

Dear Premier,

On behalf of British Columbia's farmers and ranchers, thank you for your ongoing efforts in support of the agriculture sector, including the historic commitment demonstrated by the Food Security Initiative announced earlier this year.

BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) is the lead industry advocate for key sector-wide priorities in B.C. Our mission is to grow a strong, sustainable, and competitive agriculture sector through building industry consensus and advancing public policy. We achieve this by delivering a unified voice for the sector to government through the 29 unique commodity associations that we represent. In turn, producers who hold membership in these associations generate approximately 96% of provincial farm gate sales in B.C.

On this occasion, I am writing to express concern about the continued suspension of most operations at the Port of Vancouver as well as the Port of Prince Rupert due to a labour dispute. Each year, more than \$5 billion worth of agricultural products are exported from British Columbia, of which approximately \$1.5 billion must transit the ports in Vancouver and Prince Rupert to reach overseas markets. These trade relationships, which are important to the economic viability of farming in our province, are only possible when goods can be shipped in a timely manner to where they are needed. Due to the perishability and seasonality of agricultural products, this need for a reliable supply chain is more keenly felt by farmers and ranchers than any other sector of our province's economy.

Quick and decisive action is needed to ensure that agricultural products can again be shipped dependably from the ports in Vancouver and Prince Rupert. As the harvest progresses for key agricultural exports, such as cherries and blueberries, there is a real risk of reputational damage for our sector internationally. For example, years of work by the Government of Canada, the Government of B.C., and Canadian producers to gain market access in the Republic of Korea for fresh cherries and blueberries, which was only gained in 2022, could be jeopardized if port operations continue to be suspended in the next few weeks. It is also important to note that farmers and ranchers in B.C. rely on critical inputs, such as feed additives, which can only be imported through the ports in Vancouver and Prince Rupert.

BCAC understands that both you and Ministers appointed to the federal Cabinet have previously urged port workers and employers to find a way to avert job action. The seriousness of this situation requires your leadership and continued pressure on both sides to end the British Columbia port strike.

I would be happy to meet with you or the Minister of Agriculture and Food, Hon. Pam Alexis, at your convenience to further discuss the potential impact on the agriculture sector. Please do not hesitate to contact BCAC's Executive Director, Danielle Synotte, via email at dsynotte@bcac.ca or via telephone at 604-854-4454 to coordinate such a meeting or for any additional information. Further, please find enclosed for your reference a letter addressed to the Prime Minister from the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, of which BCAC is a member.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter, and I look forward to future opportunities to work together in advancing the sustainability of farming and ranching in our province!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Woike". The signature is written in a dark ink on a white background.

Jennifer Woike
President, BC Agriculture Council

CC: Hon. Pam Alexis, Minister of Agriculture and Food