

BY EMAIL

September 23, 2020

This letter was sent to all federal political parties

RE: CUPW demands climate emergency action, improvement of labour laws and expansion of public postal service.

Dear,

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers represents about 60,000 workers across every region of our country.

The majority of our members work at Canada Post, but we also represent workers in the private sector; including couriers, cleaners and first responders.

In short, our union represents the vital frontline workers that never stopped working during this COVID crisis.

We are still in the middle of the pandemic, and we are working hard to keep our members safe as we continue to deliver the goods that our fellow citizens need.

The pandemic has revealed many cracks in our system. Going back to “normal”, when normal was working for very few, should not be the goal.

We must all think about solutions to move us forward so we do not repeat the same mistakes.

Keep and create jobs by expanding the postal service

As we move forward, the economy will continue to depend on deliveries and convenient services that are available to everyone. It is still not clear how long COVID-19 will be part of our lives, but it stands to be around for some time.

Giant companies like Amazon are doing great business, and making billions while exploiting vulnerable workers. Rather than let them benefit greedily from precarious workers, we must advocate for Canada Post to be “the” delivery option in Canada.

For years now, we have been advocating to leverage the formidable capacity of our public postal service to deliver more revenue generating services to Canadians in need.

Our Delivering Community Power campaign aims to see an expanded postal system that takes care of all Canadians – reaching the people and the communities who have been left behind and who are paying the price for corporate abandon.

We can ensure that we continue to have secure jobs. Expanded services such as postal banking and retrofitting our post offices, as well as a system for checking-in with seniors and vulnerable populations, will preserve and/or create new jobs.

The future of the world, post COVID-19 will depend on us looking out for each other. As you know “an injury to one is an injury to all”. We must continue to fight for each other’s wellbeing and safety, at work, at home and in our communities.

This pandemic has brought a lot to light, including the problems with a profit-based economy, at the expense of the wellbeing of workers and their families. Let us be at the forefront of insisting that positive change and new alternatives to the status quo be implemented.

Expand services

Delivering Community Power is about expansion: Postal banking, senior check-ins and charging stations for electric vehicles. This pandemic has shown the little regard that market-based solutions has for people living in precarious conditions, whether they are elderly, poor, differently abled, Indigenous, racialized or many of these together. Let’s put a stop to that. Let’s fight to “deliver community power”.

Implementing postal banking so that remote communities have access to financial services, and underserved people and families have fair and accessible banking is a win for everyone. People get services, and in turn, jobs remain at Canada Post.

Developing a process to check in on seniors and other vulnerable people is also important, and will build social solidarity. Other postal services in the world have seniors check in services (such as France and Japan). It works there, it can work here.

Retrofitting different Canada Post buildings nationwide can be done by CUPW members and yield reductions in emissions. The future is actually bright if we put this in place.

Expanding door-to-door delivery and expanding services to support seniors, people with disabilities and others is the way forward. Since postal workers already know their communities, they are well positioned to do regular check-ups on vulnerable peoples.

Across the world, we have seen people support and help each other through this pandemic – but imagine that sense of community and support being available regularly for the people who need it most. That is a future worth fighting for.

Green the economy

CUPW is also highly concerned about the catastrophic climate emergency. We insist that Canada's next Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), to be submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate change (UNFCCC) as part of the Paris agreement, include the following:

- a) An increase in climate ambition to a no more than 1.5 degree global warming above pre-industrial levels target by 2100; and
- b) Include a reference to the role of crown corporations and the public sector in increasing ambition and supporting a Just Transition

We also expect that government will deliver on its promise to pass an ambitious Just Transition Act which makes a clear commitment to workers in affected sectors.

Government should also invest heavily in green infrastructure to get us there.

As a respected and relied-upon public service, Canada Post is poised to lead the way for all Canadians in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It can do this by electrifying its fleet of vehicles. This is technically feasible. Not only would this reduce that carbon footprint for Canada Post, but it would also pressure the private sector to do likewise.

Also, in an era where cities will face increased congestion pressures, Canada Post can serve as a last mile delivery agent of choice to reduce urban congestion.

Retrofitting post office infrastructure with solar panels is also part of Delivering Community Power. Postal workers could also be the ones working to install these.

Protecting workers by improving federal labour laws

As the work landscape changes, steady, regular, full-time work has been replaced by gig work – a patchwork of working different “gigs”, often through an app.

Last year, CUPW launched a campaign to unionize the 3000 couriers working for Foodora, a multinational food delivery app. Like many other gig economy workers, they were treated unfairly and poorly by the multinational.

Last February, we won a historic ruling from the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) on the issue of classification. The OLRB ruled that couriers are in fact dependent contractors. Similar to employees, they are dependent on the company and the app is a tool of the employer.

This ruling also gave workers the right to legally unionize in Ontario. CUPW is asking to extend this right at the federal level .

We have identified four avenues: putting an end to the misclassification of workers, protecting workers' rights in case of contract flipping, accountability for multinationals that deny workers' rights and workers' protection in case of bankruptcy.

Workers deserve fair working conditions and basic rights, rights that are not recognized by any gig employer and they all misclassify workers as independent contractors.

Expand and innovate a frontline loved public service

CUPW is proud to also represent cleaners, food couriers, drivers, warehouse workers, printers, emergency medical dispatchers and other workers in the private sector.

We have the advantage of seeing the power of our largest logistics network at work. We see the potential of our country, our members are engaged and will continue to fight for a better society. In this period of crisis, we know that our public services are the backbone that support people in need.

Let's start working right now to strengthen our public postal service.

The new parliamentary session is an occasion to start this work so that Canadians can thrive on a better and more supportive foundation.

It will be our pleasure to discuss further.

In Solidarity,



Jan Simpson
National President
Canadian Union of Postal Workers

c.c. National Executive Committee
Regional Executive Committees
National Union Representatives
Regional Union Representatives
Specialists

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