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February 21, 2025

BY E-MAIL

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

Thank you for your invitation to attend the Canada-U.S. Economic Summit in Toronto on February 7, 2025.

On behalf of 750,000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), I am writing to bring your attention to CUPE's calls to action in response to the serious threats we face to our economy and sovereignty from the United States.

Canada must meet this crisis with bold action and progressive, public solutions to protect jobs, public services, our communities, and our way of life. CUPE is calling on the federal government to use the power at its disposal to grow good jobs and protect infrastructure and key sectors.

At the outset, I want to note that the calls for the dismantling of so-called "inter-provincial trade barriers" risk triggering a race to the bottom in terms of employment standards, licensing standards, and other hard-fought victories for workers in different provinces. Estimates of the benefits of dismantling regional protections are grossly overstated. In terms of genuine barriers to interprovincial trade, the most common obstacles cited by Canadian businesses in 2023 were transportation costs and availability of transportation, pointing to the need for public investment in pan-Canadian transportation infrastructure.

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Our union is advocating for the federal government to provide income support for workers through the existing Employment Insurance (EI) Work-Sharing Program, not a program that subsidizes profits like the pandemic-era Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). The government can also better support workers by reversing recent cuts to EI training programs and expanding programs to retrain affected workers.

Young workers cannot be left behind before their working lives even begin. CUPE recommends that the federal government create good union jobs for young workers by working with public sector unions and municipalities.

The federal government should also use available tools like the Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB) and Canada Development Investment Corporation (CDEV) to act in the public interest. Canada can stabilize the economy with public ownership of key transportation and energy infrastructure through the CIB, which has \$22 billion at its disposal. The CDEV can be used to buy stakes that shore up large companies and support them in the public interest, not for profit. Canada can also develop public manufacturing in sectors like pharmaceuticals that benefit us all.

Further, if a company doing business in Canada threatens to move nationally important operations to the U.S., the federal government could take ownership. Emergency nationalization should be on the table.

Currently, the Canadian journalism labour tax credit applies to print journalism but expanding it to broadcast news and expanding it to support the labour cost of news production will help maintain good jobs in smaller communities and fight misinformation. The federal government should also redirect advertising dollars away from platforms owned by tech oligarchs Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg, and into advertising that supports Canadian news programming and jobs.

As we face down this crisis, it is clear to most people that Canadian public investments should support jobs in Canada. That's why CUPE also recommends that the government make any federal subsidies to the telecommunications sector contingent on jobs being created in Canada and eliminating outsourcing of work. Canada must maintain telecommunication protections that prevent large foreign telecommunication companies from doing business in Canada and only allow Canadian use of the broadcasting spectrum.

Each step we take, we must remember to recognize and uphold the rights of Indigenous peoples through the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and in this spirit, we call on the federal government to fully recognize the rights provided to Indigenous peoples by the Jay Treaty. As Canada acts to protect everyone who calls this land home, we must remember that we are a nation of many nations.

Workers must stand united in opposition to any proposal for government austerity. Public services are desperately needed during an economic downturn.

In fact, the federal government should increase federal transfers for health care, education, social services and municipalities, to deliver services, create jobs, and soften the blow of a recession and forecasted spike in inflation.

Enclosed is CUPE's position paper outlining these calls to action in further detail.

Let's work together.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MH' followed by a stylized flourish.

MARK HANCOCK
National President