



SUBMISSION
TO THE
CANADA POST CORPORATION' S STRATEGIC REVIEW
FROM THE
NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION OF LABOUR
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Submission to the Canada Post Corporation Strategic Review

Dear members of the Advisory Panel,

The Nova Scotia Federation of Labour (NSFL) is pleased to have this opportunity to present its views to the Canada Post Corporation Strategic Review (CPCSR).

By way of introduction, the NSFL is an umbrella Labour organization established in 1956 under a charter from the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). Today, the NSFL represents over 70,000 members of affiliated unions in more than 400 union locals working in every aspect of Nova Scotia's economy and in every region and community of the province; all of whom are shareholders in and customers of the Canada Post Corporation.

Seven community-based District Labour Councils are affiliated to the Federation from the Annapolis Valley, Cape Breton District, Cumberland District, Halifax-Dartmouth and District, New Glasgow and District, South Shore, and Strait Area.

The Federation works with the District Labour Councils in their communities as they endeavor to carry through the policies of the trade union movement initiated at the provincial and national levels and enable labour to play a role in their communities.

The Federation speaks on behalf of and represents the interests of organized and unorganized workers. It promotes decent wages and working conditions, improved health and safety laws and lobbies for fair taxes and strong social programs. It works for social equality, and to end racism and discrimination.

While the Federation does not deal with collective bargaining directly, it does focus on issues that impact on workers and their families; such as provincial labour standards, pension issues, workers' compensation and occupational health and safety standards, which do have an effect on and are affected by industrial relations.

Every two years, the NSFL holds a policy convention to which all affiliated local unions and labour councils can send elected delegates. It is these delegates who are responsible for determining through their votes, the future policies of the NSFL. It is also at such conventions that the Officers and Executive Council of the Federation are elected.

The Federation Executive Council is made up of seven officers consisting of; a President, a First Vice-President, a Secretary-Treasurer, three Vice Presidents-at-Large and a Vice-President Representative of Workers of Colour & Aboriginal Peoples; seventeen General Vice-Presidents representing affiliated unions and a representative of the Nova Scotia Federation of Union Retirees. Our constitution mandates gender representation within this structure.

This Executive Council is an important feature of the NSFL's structure, as its members bring with them the views, concerns, advice and opinions from every walk of life, every community and from all the different provincial regions, occupations and social perspectives, speaking on behalf of Nova Scotian workers and their families.

The President and two staff members work out of the Federation office on a full-time basis.

As previously stated, the NSFL is pleased to have the opportunity to present our views to the Canada Post Corporation Strategic Review (CPCSR); and wish to state from the very onset, that we fully support the views, concerns and positions put forward by the Unions that represent the workers of Canada Post as well as that put forward by the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) on this very crucial matter of such importance and value to all Canadians.

Although we welcome this opportunity to make this submission; we would, however, like to express our extreme concern and disappointment that a review into something as important to all Canadians as our public postal service is being done in such a short time frame and without public hearings.

The Canada Post Corporation Strategic Review Panel should be traveling across the country to meet with Canadians in order to hear their point of view.

Furthermore, the deadline for submitting briefs should be extended to 2009; the current deadline of September 2, 2008 simply does not give enough time for the public to analyze the *Consultation Guidance Document* and do research in order to prepare a brief.

Considering the broad mandate this advisory panel has been given and the potential damage that it could inflict on this very important public service; to rush through this process without allowing all citizens of this country sufficient time and opportunity to express their views and concerns on this issue, is very concerning and shows complete lack of desire or intent to have true public consultation on this crucial public service matter.

We are very concerned about the future of universal, public postal service in this country.

As users of the mail, we are concerned by the kind of changes being considered by the CPCSR, such as deregulation of our public post office.

The NSFL is, as previously stated, a provincial umbrella organization and we along with our affiliates rely on the Postal Service for much of our communication with our affiliated members, who live in virtually every community and region of the province.

In addition to direct communication with our affiliates, we also utilize the Postal Service in much of our communication with our community partners that we support and/or work with on areas of common interest or concern.

We are very concerned about the issue of whether Canada Post should continue to have the exclusive privilege of handling our mail, or if it should be opened up to free-market competition.

We firmly believe that deregulation would jeopardize universal postal service. If postal delivery is opened up to free market competition, those living in rural or remote areas would see a reduction or elimination of services because it is not profitable.

Postal deregulation in other countries has led to reduced service, higher postal rates and fewer jobs.

Deregulation elsewhere has not proven to be a good thing for the public. People who use deregulated post offices tend to pay a higher postage rate than we do.

The standard postage rate in Sweden has increased by 90% since its post office was deregulated in 1993 while the Canadian rate has increased by only 21% during the same period (1993 to 2005).

The United Kingdom's Royal Mail has faced intense pressure from competitors since it was deregulated in 2006, resulting in falling mail volumes and revenues. Royal Mail says higher prices for stamped letters are inevitable and universal service is at risk.

I personally had the opportunity to spend better than three weeks in the UK recently and can confirm from discussions with citizens who depend in the Postal Service that they are far from happy customers. From these discussions regarding their Postal Service; I heard about higher cost; poorer or lost service; fewer jobs and of an apparent high or growing level of lost mail.

There is no good reason to make a change that would undermine Canada Post's ability to fund and provide services to all Canadians.

We currently have one of the lowest standard postage rates in the industrial world. Our postal services are universal and affordable, no small feat in the second largest country in the world.

The quality of our public postal service, access to an affordable postal service for all Canadians and many good jobs, especially jobs occupied primarily by women in rural communities, will be jeopardized if Canada Post were to be deregulated or if it could not

continue to invest in the expansion of products and services due to obligations related to a narrowed financial framework. The primary objective of a public postal service has to be maintained, and surpluses of the CPC should be re-invested in the improvement and expansion of our public postal service.

It will be difficult for Canada Post to improve public postal service if the government erodes or eliminates the mechanism that funds this service (i.e. the exclusive privilege).

Our post office is not broken. It does not need to be fixed, only improved.

We commend and support The Canadian Labour Congress when they state they will condemn any attempt by the federal government to deregulate all or part of Canada Post. The primary public policy objectives of universal, accessible and affordable public postal service must be protected against the market in the best interest of all Canadians – wherever they live.

This document is respectfully submitted on behalf of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour:



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CAW Local 4005