

February 19, 2020

The Honourable Scott Moe  
Premier of Saskatchewan  
Chair, Council of the Federation  
226 Legislative Building  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
S4S 0B3

Dear Premier Moe,

On behalf of the Canadian Propane Association, in anticipation of your meeting later today with your fellow premiers, I wish to inform the Council of the Federation, our concerns regarding the blockades of infrastructure in Canada and in particular, the railway blockades.

Canadians support and defend the right to peaceful protest as a fundamental tenet of our democratic society. But at this time, one must seriously consider whether that right extends to blocking railways, highways, bridges or public buildings.

The blockades at several locations, including rail lines in Vaughn and Belleville in Ontario, St-Catherine in Québec and today near Edmonton, are hurting regular people across Canada and the businesses that keep our economy going. The risks are huge for everyone who shares this land.

As wisely pointed out by Mohawk Council of Kanesatake Grand Chief Serge Simon “When people start looking at how this blockade is going to affect their daily lives, price of food, probably price of fuel, things are going to happen that people aren’t going to take very well.”

Preventing the delivery of home heating fuels such as propane for families, nursing homes and schools; chlorine to treat drinking water and propane to hospitals for cooking is not akin to a delay in getting a parcel from Amazon.

The latter would be an “inconvenience” as some have said. This is a crisis. It affects both Canadians and Indigenous communities.

The harm these blockades are causing to families and communities coast to coast to coast are very real and far-reaching. As we near the end of week two of the blockades, workers across sectors are being laid off. And more will inevitably follow.

Among the consequences of halting rail transportation is the serious damage to the industries underpinning the Canadian economy.

Farmers for example, are hit hard by the rail blockades. They need propane to heat buildings; shipments of soybeans, grain and corn to feed livestock; and fertilizer for their fields. And they need to ship their crops to get paid.

Drinking water will be threatened if chlorine for water treatment can't be delivered. Cities and municipalities could run out of chlorine in a week or two.

Retailers are also warning that there could be a shortage of important products. Fresh produce, personal hygiene products and baby formula are among the consumer goods that could soon be in short supply.

Propane supply is reaching a critical level in Quebec, Ontario and Atlantic Canada, where 85,000 families rely on it as the main home heating fuel. Across Canada, 35 per cent of propane use is for heating. This rate goes up substantially in rural and remote communities.

Internationally, there are legitimate fears that Canada's reputation as a reliable supply partner will be damaged. The long-term cost of this to the Canadian economy is hard to quantify but certainly it's massive, measured in the millions of dollars.

Canada's propane industry agrees that meaningful, respectful dialogue must be advanced in resolving this crisis. But shutting down an economy and interfering so significantly on the entire supply chain – as we have seen over the past week – does not help lay the groundwork for meaningful dialogue.

Canada needs action toward a resolution now, and a call for the blockades to come down immediately.

Getting to a resolution demands the full attention of Prime Minister Trudeau and his cabinet, as well as provincial governments. This is an all-of-Canada crisis, and it requires an all-of-Canada solution.

Time is of the essence. The longer this crisis lasts, the more harm it will cause to families and communities -- and the longer it will take our economy to recover. Once trains do get going again, it will take considerable time for industries to get back to normal operations – up to one week for every day of disruption, according to propane industry estimates.

We can't wait any longer. Canada needs solutions now.

The 430 members of the Canadian Propane Association appreciate your leadership in this important matter. They are asking our provincial leaders to do what they can to help bring about an end to the blockades, before the health and well-being of Canadians become even more threatened.

Sincerely,



Nathalie St-Pierre  
President & CEO, Canadian Propane Association