

BY MAIL AND EMAIL

February 11, 2016

Hon. Catherine McKenna
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
107 Catherine Street (Main Office)
Ottawa, ON K2P 0P4

Dear Ms. McKenna:

First let me congratulate you on your election and your appointment as Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Your portfolio is surely one of the most important for the future of Canada, and in fact the entire planet. We were very pleased to see Canada join the international community in seeking ways to save the planet and improve the biosphere.

As COP21 has made clear to us, radical changes and radical solutions have to be mainstreamed. I am writing to you in the hope that you will use your influence to include the issue of climate change in the mandate of the upcoming review of Canada Post Corporation and to request a meeting.

For many years the Canadian Union of Postal Workers has been active in attempting to convince the management of Canada Post that the postal service could play a very important role in promoting environmental innovation in Canada. As you may know, Canada Post has the largest vehicle fleet and the most number of retail outlets of any organization in Canada. This presents a major opportunity. Located in virtually every community Canada Post can, and should, demonstrate the highest standards of environmental responsibility. Our own organization is currently proceeding with an internal environmental audit so that we are not just advocating a greenshift but actually doing so. We think we can play a big part and hope to develop cooperative solutions together to energize a path to a greener Canada.

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In the past, CUPW has made many suggestions to Canada Post with the objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We have proposed working together to conduct environmental audits of facilities and operations, retro-fitting and replacing the fleet with electric and hybrid vehicles, and amending our collective agreement to include the protection of the environment as a joint responsibility of the union and management. We have proposed that Canada Post negotiate agreements with all major courier companies to consolidate parcel delivery for the “last mile” helping to reduce emissions and lessen urban congestion.

Not surprisingly, under the direction of the previous government, little was accomplished. Their ineffectiveness in this area, and even hostility, made Canada a disappointing international embarrassment. We believe that you understand this well. We were pleased to see you play a good role in Paris, and for seizing the initiative to create space for different Canadian stakeholders to come together in conversation. Bringing the provincial environment ministers together recently and promoting federal-provincial dialogue on this was overdue and signals the possibility of a new bolder direction for Canadians. With a new government that accepts its responsibilities concerning the environment we believe there is tremendous potential for a public entity with national reach like the post office to become a leader in innovation with respect to the reduction of GHG emissions. We are quite positive that such an approach would have valuable spin-offs nationally and globally.

For this reason, we are requesting that you use your influence to ensure that the upcoming public review explicitly include environmental leadership, innovation and protection as issues to be addressed by the review. We would like to see the day when post offices in every community present themselves as positive examples of facilities that have reduced their GHG footprints. We believe that not only could the Canada Post fleet be visible symbols of non-polluting delivery vehicles but also that electric vehicle charging stations for public could be located at all postal facilities.

Our union has a long history of promoting environmental concerns as you can see from the articles indicated below. Until now it has been a frustrating experience witnessing the potential for Canada Post to be a centre of environmental innovation that goes to waste because of the anti-environmental bias of the previous Conservative government.

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We hope we can work with you and all stakeholders to turn this situation around and generate some real tangible results which could benefit Canadians for generations to come.

We hope to meet you in order to provide you with a concrete summary of our proposals for a green innovative service. We believe there is a strong opportunity to work together to help shift our direction as a society to meet these targets. You are, of course, more than welcome to visit us at our Centretown office at 377 Bank Street also.

Sincerely,



Dave Bleakney
2nd National Vice-President, CUPW

cc National Executive Board, CUPW
CUPW Specialists

Articles published about Postal Services and Climate Change

Book article: Canadian labour's climate dilemma
(Geoff Bickerton and Carla Lipsig-Mummé)
<http://search.library.utoronto.ca/details?10076231>

Paper: Climate Change and Canadian Unions: The Dilemma for Labour
http://warming.apps01.yorku.ca/wp-content/uploads/WP_2013-02_Lipsig-Mumme_Lafleur_Bickerton_Climate-Change-Canadian-Unions.pdf

Book article: Climate Change and Work and Employment in the Canadian Postal and Courier Sector (Meg Gingrich, Sarah Ryan & Geoff Bickerton)
<https://fernwoodpublishing.ca/book/climatework>

Paper: Climate Change and Work and Employment in The Canadian Postal and Courier Sector (page 108) (Geoff Bickerton, Meg Gingrich & Sarah Ryan)
<http://warming.apps01.yorku.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/What-do-we-know-full-report-final.pdf>

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