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January 25, 2010

Rob Merrifield, Minister of State of Transport
Place de Ville, Tower C, 29th Floor
330 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N5

Dear Mr. Merrifield:

Re: Canada Post

I received a copy of a letter to you from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (dated December 7, 2009) which raises concerns regarding the Canadian Postal Service Charter and the Canada Post Corporation Strategic Review (CPCSR).

Like CUPW, I am concerned that the government has not clarified its policy on the moratorium, as outlined in the Canadian Postal Service Charter. How does the government interpret its commitment to maintain the moratorium on rural post office closures? Are public post offices in rural and small one-post-office towns covered by the moratorium provision in the new Canadian Postal Service Charter? Furthermore, is there an expectation that the post offices and outlets covered by the moratorium will be public offices and not private outlets?

As well, would the government be willing to get public input on the Canadian Postal Service Charter? We wholeheartedly agree with CUPW on the need for public input. At the moment, the charter does not do what it was designed to do. It does not "provide a standard of postal service that meets the needs of the people of Canada," especially in relation to consultation over changes to service. For example, the current charter says that Canada Post must consult with people at least one month prior to closing, moving or amalgamating their public post office or changing their method of delivery. The corporation is also expected to explore options that address people's concerns. This process does not meet people's needs. One month is not a reasonable length of time for a community to discuss what can be done when faced with a post office closure or a demand to move a rural mail box.

Likewise I am concerned that you have not let the public and Parliamentarians know whether you will be responding to other CPCSR report recommendations. What are your plans for responding to report recommendations? Will you be endorsing the CPCSR report recommendation against a general deregulation of the postal market or a

reduction in the existing level of Canada Post's exclusive privilege (#9)? As well, will you be rejecting the recommendation for an employee share ownership plan (#25)? The government instructed the CPCSIR not to consider privatization. Selling or giving shares to employees is partial privatization.

Since you released the report of the CPCSIR in April 2009, I would imagine that you have some idea of where the government intends to go with its response to the report. I think it is time to share the government's views with others so that there can be an adequate public debate, if need be, over the moratorium, employee shares and other issues.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Christopherson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Christopherson, MP
Hamilton Centre
NDP Post Office Critic

c.c. Denis Lemelin, National President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers