



APAS requests expanded interswitching for captive grain shippers

February 24, 2023 (Regina, SK) – The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) is calling on Transport Canada to implement the National Supply-Chain Task Force’s recommendation to expand railway interswitching zones in May 2023.

The request was made in a letter to the Federal Transport Minister last week expressing support for the National Supply-Chain Task Force’s Final Report that was released in October 2021.

"The National Supply-Chain Task Force identified railroad interswitching as key policy that could be introduced quickly to encourage more competition in the rail transportation system," noted APAS President Ian Boxall. "Currently, shippers must be within 30 kms of an interchange. Of the 203 licensed grain handling facilities in Saskatchewan, 200 are captive to a single service provider, and only 23 are located within that 30 km radius." Boxall highlighted.

"From 2015 to 2018 there was a 160 km radius for interswitching so we know it is a competitive tool that is effective at giving shippers more options which improves service and rates," Boxall added. "This leads to more accountability between shippers and railways that translates into better service for producers."

"Interswitching as a competitive tool for captive grain shippers and shortline operators is practically non-existent in a province that produces over half of Canada’s grain exports."

APAS also supports the Task Force recommendations strengthening the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) authority, providing the CTA with more funding to help fulfill its mandate, and additional supports for shortline railways.

"Saskatchewan’s contributions to global food security are critically important given the uncertainty in major grain markets," noted Boxall. "Yet we remain dependent on a rail system that requires greater accountability and transparency to help ensure Saskatchewan farmers are competitive and major disruptions minimized. Making the system more competitive and efficient is in the best interests of all farmers going forward and we should not be distracted by the fact there haven’t been any major system-wide services issues so far this year."

"We are only two and half months away from the targeted date for expanded interswitching. With federal pre-budget consultations also underway, we wanted to ensure elected officials and other decision-makers are aware that our members are looking for policy changes and investments that help Saskatchewan farmers get their products to market in a timely and cost-efficient manner."



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About APAS – Founded in 2000 by farmers, APAS is Saskatchewan’s democratic, non-partisan agricultural policy and advocacy organization. APAS tackles agriculture’s most important problems and offers practical solutions to provincial and national decision makers.