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## **APAS calls for moratorium on closure of producer car loading sites**

Cites economic and environmental factors, as well as out of date legislation

*August 28, 2017 – For Immediate Release* – The Agricultural Producers Association disagrees with the Canadian Pacific Railway's decision to close at least 10 producer car loading sites in Saskatchewan. In a letter to Federal Transport Minister Marc Garneau, APAS is requesting a moratorium on the closure of producer car loading sites until a full review of railway costs is completed. The letter also requests legislative changes to ensure that the closure of urban and rural sidings are subject to the same requirements.

"Producer car loading is an important source of competition and innovation in Saskatchewan's agriculture industry," said APAS President Todd Lewis. "Shipping grain by rail is far more cost-effective than hauling grain long distances by truck and results in a much smaller carbon footprint."

Lewis also pointed out that once a loading site is listed for discontinuance, it is extremely difficult to have the site re-listed for service at a later date.

"Although demand for producer cars has declined in recent years, our industry is very dynamic," Lewis said. "There is the potential that crop diversification and increased production could lead to more demand in the future. This demand will not be met if producers lose access to their local rail sidings."

Grain producers have a legislative right to order rail cars through the Canadian Grain Commission under the *Canada Grains Act*. This is to ensure that producers have meaningful access to market their grains using Canada's rail network. However, in the last decade, Canadian railways have been closing public loading sites at an accelerated rate. If these closures proceed, the number of loading sites on CP rail lines in Saskatchewan will be reduced to 26, down from 79 in 2005.

Although the number of sidings have decreased dramatically over the years, the railways are currently compensated for maintaining the same number of sidings that existed in 1992.

"The Maximum Revenue Entitlement program's formula is clearly out of date," Lewis said. "What we are saying to the Minister is no more closures until we get a costing review to bring it in line with today's operating environment."

Under the Canada Transportation Act, railways can close a loading site after 60 days of publicizing the notice in a local newspaper. APAS is also asking that that time frame is



extended to give municipalities and affected producers more notice and ensure they are adequately consulted.

If no moratorium is granted, the following sidings could begin closing by mid-September:

Tompkins – RM of Gull Lake

Midale – RM of Cymri

Cupar – RM of Cupar

Markinch – RM of Cupar

Grand Coulee – RM of Lumsden

Wilcox – RM of Bratt's Lake

Moosomin – RM of Moosomin

Tisdale – RM of Connaught/Tisdale

Qu'Appelle – RM of South Qu'Appelle

Duval – RM of Last Mountain Valley

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For further information and to arrange an interview, please contact:

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**Background:** APAS is Saskatchewan's general farm organization – formed to provide farmers and ranchers with a democratically elected, grassroots, non-partisan, producer-run organization based on rural municipal boundaries. As the united voice of thousands of agricultural producers and ranchers in Saskatchewan, we strive to represent the views of a wide variety of agricultural stakeholders in order to form comprehensive policies that can benefit all sectors of society.