

NEWS RELEASE

Producers need action on delayed legislation to get stalled grain moving
Coalition looking to last transportation crisis for solutions

SASKATOON (March 8, 2018) – A Saskatchewan producer transportation coalition is calling for swift legislative action to kickstart the movement of Canadian grains to port and market.

The coalition, which includes the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission (Sask Wheat), the Saskatchewan Barley Development Commission (SaskBarley) and the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS), is encouraging the Senate to quickly pass Bill C-49, which will amend the *Canada Transportation Act* to avoid further disruption in transporting crops in 2018. The new legislation includes requirements for railways to disclose data and increase transparency on performance metrics, service and rates.

Given the delay in legislation, the Saskatchewan producer coalition is also asking the federal government for interim short haul interswitching provisions similar to those in Bill C-30, *The Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act*, to allow for the optimal use of railway capacity to clear backlogs.

"Producers need the federal government to show they understand the financial pressures we are under," says SaskBarley Chair Jason Skotheim. "The provisions in Bill C-49 are encouraging, but now we need to see them in action. It needs to get passed quickly to be effective or else we will require provisional legislation to get the cars moving."

"This situation illustrates why we need the new legislation in place," says Sask Wheat Chair Laura Reiter. "The lack of transparency and accountability we are seeing from the railways is a result of there being no consequences for providing farmers with an inadequate level of service. This has to be fixed quickly before the economic damage is severe."

Farmers felt the economic consequences of constrained rail service and widened basis levels in the 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 crop years, which cost western Canadian producers an estimated \$5 billion to \$6.7 billion, and are seeing a repeat of that situation in the 2017/2018 crop year. Because of the poor performance by the railways on grain movements, producer deliveries and export movements have been impacted, resulting in higher inventories on farms and potentially lost export customers.

"Farmers are stuck with more grain in their bins just when they need money to pay bills and prepare for spring seeding," says APAS President Todd Lewis. "They need a plan to address the backlog and get the 2017 crop to port."

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