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January 29, 2025

Government Oversight Fails Farmers on the Bunge-Viterra Merger

Regina, SK – Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) opposes the recent decision by Transport Canada to allow the merger of Bunge Limited and Viterra Limited, and the Competition Bureau says the conditions do not meet the standards set out in the *Competition Act*. The Bureau's assessment raises serious alarms about the potential erosion of competition within crucial segments of the agricultural market, directly impacting Saskatchewan's farmers.

The detailed objections from the Competition Bureau on Transport Canada's oversight decision of the proposed merger focus on significant concerns that the arrangements would fail to preserve competitive markets for farmers and customers. The merger could potentially lead to increased control by a single entity, suffocating competition and innovation.

"The decision by Transport Canada, countered by the Competition Bureau's profound concerns, showcases the troubling oversight that could destabilize the agricultural markets upon which our economy relies so significantly," said Bill Prybylski, APAS President. "Accepting subpar conditions sets a dangerous precedent, risking the livelihoods of countless farmers and the welfare of consumers."

The Competition Bureau highlights that the merger's remedies proposed by Bunge and Viterra do not adequately address the potential harms identified. These inadequacies include concerns about the merger's effects on market dynamics and an unfavorable shift in market power, which could disadvantage producers significantly.

APAS demands a reconsideration of this merger arrangement by Transport Canada, urging for the adoption of stronger, more effective regulatory measures as advised by the Competition Bureau. The current stance risks significant and lasting damage to the foundational aspects of our agricultural community.

"If government's role is to preserve and protect market competition, then it has failed miserably with this decision, even by the standards set out in its own legislation." Prybylski lamented. "We support the Competition Bureau's concerns and echo their call for robust, enforceable conditions that genuinely address the merger's far-reaching impacts," Prybylski continued. "We have requested a meeting with the Transport Minister to discuss our concerns and giving them an opportunity to explain their decision. The only response so far is silence."

APAS believes that the terms of the merger should more effectively safeguard competitive integrity and uphold the agricultural vitality of Saskatchewan's agricultural sector.

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