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*Representing Northern Business Since 1973*

June 10, 2020

Hon Minister Katrina Nokleby  
PO Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9  
[Katrina\\_nokleby@gov.nt.ca](mailto:Katrina_nokleby@gov.nt.ca)

RE: Trucking Industry

Dear Hon Minister Nokleby,

The NWT Chamber of Commerce represents over 100 members as well as over 3,500 businesses of every size and sector throughout the NWT.

We want to commend the territorial government in the swiftness in which they have been making announcements and adjusting qualifying requirements to fit our small and medium (SME) business sectors.

As I am sure, you are also aware of this unprecedented time for businesses resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic arose during an already grim economic outlook for the NWT. According to the GNWT's economic outlook, the economy was to decrease by 4.3% in 2019 with a more optimistic outlook of an increase of 3.8%. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we can be assured that the NWT economy will not be growing, and we must focus on saving our SMEs in the territory and prepare ourselves for how business is going to look in the coming months and years.

One specific industry that is being particularly hit hard is the local trucking industry. This is an industry that should be thriving during this current pandemic. Due to the contradictory rules established for local truckers vs. southern truckers, we have now crippled the industry. Currently, any trucker from the south can come into the NWT unload their load and then have 36 hours before they have to leave the NWT. Until the border crossing was moved the distance from the checkpoint to Yellowknife was 462km roundtrip; now, it will be just over 600km.

This allows southern truckers to pick up loads and bring them back down south without ever having to self-isolate. For local trucking companies who need to go south to pick up loads as per pre-arranged contracts, obeying the same rules as southern truckers, they are being ordered to self-isolate for 14 days each time they return. This removes the employee (and at times the owner) from rotation for 14 days. There are instances where Protect NWT has advised them that their truck has to be pulled out of rotation as well as the trucker, to avoid exposure, has slept in the truck. The local company is now having to pay for an employee and, at times, a truck that is out of circulation and, at times, not even in their community.



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Below is an example from one of our local trucking companies P.R. Contracting in Fort Simpson: "The issue is not so much the difference between southern drivers versus northern drivers. So far, my company has lost four trips south. The problem is the south can come into the north and head out with our trips while if we make the same trip, we must self isolate for two weeks, making it impossible to be price competitive. For one example, there is a truck coming from Grande Prairie to the Deh Cho area that is taking orders by phone from customers, going to different stores in Grande Prairie, and transporting them to the north. He doesn't have to self isolate. If a northern company does the same thing, we must self isolate. One specific example of this unfairness is when I asked my company to pick up wood pellets in which my driver would have no human contact, sleep and eat in the truck, and be in and out of Alberta the same day. It was suggested I get the wood pellets brought in by an Alberta company at an additional cost to my company and the consumer that way I could avoid self-isolation."

When this has been raised by the trucking companies to local offices and/or Protect NWT, they have been told to have the customer/supplier bring the load to the border and swap there. This is not a feasible suggestion. Most of the time, the loads are being picked up directly as the customer/supplier has no other way to get the load up to the NWT, let alone the border, or it affects the pricing of the contract.

We ask that ITI work with Chief Public Health Officer Kami Kandola to update long-haul truckers' regulations to make this an even playing field before we lose any of our local trucking companies. As we have faith in the southern truckers to obeyed by our rules, we need to extend that same trust to our local sector and help them to continue their business.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Renée Comeau".

Renée Comeau  
Executive Director  
NWT Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenni Bruce".

Jenni Bruce  
President  
NWT Chamber of Commerce



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Signatures of Support

Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deneen Everett".

Deneen Everett  
Executive Director  
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Syer".

Tim Syer  
President  
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce

*Signature not available at this time*

Kirby Groat, President  
Fort Simpson Chamber of Commerce



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*Cc'd: Hon Caroline Cochrane, Premier of the NW; Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs;*