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May 2nd, 2019

Honourable Joyce Murray
President of the Treasury Board and
Minister of Digital Government
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Madam Minister,

By way of introduction, I write to you as National President of the Union of Taxation Employees (UTE), a Component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), representing approximately 26,000 members employed by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). You may recall that we had an opportunity to meet on September 28, 2018 to discuss the deficiencies of the Phoenix Pay System and to discuss the advantages that the Canada Revenue Agency's Corporate Administration System may have to offer.

On behalf of the Union of Taxation Employees (UTE), I would first like to extend our congratulations to you on your appointment as President of the Treasury Board. Moreover, I extend to you our commitment to create and maintain a cooperative and harmonious labour relations environment aimed at improving employees' working lives and promoting an efficient and productive public service.

Having said this, I would also like to discuss the current bargaining situation between UTE/PSAC and the CRA and ask for your intervention in this matter.

In the past, after the Department of Revenue Canada was proclaimed through legislation to be the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (now the Canada Revenue Agency), UTE/PSAC bargained directly with CRA. In fact, in 2007 and again in 2010, the parties were able to negotiate a collective agreement before the expiry of the previous one. This was historic as this had never occurred previously or since in the entire federal public service. In reality, we created a new approach for harmonious and productive labour relations between unions in the federal public service and the Government of Canada through their delegated bargaining authorities. Regrettably, this new era of labour relations and mutual respect was overridden by, what in UTE's opinion, was an ill-conceived amendment to legislation, reinstating Treasury Board's control over the bargaining process within the CRA through Bill C-45.

Subsequent to the proclamation of Bill C-45, and with Treasury Board's oversight, the last collective agreement between UTE/PSAC and the CRA took four and half (4 ½) years and

a strike vote before it was concluded. This current round of bargaining has been far from productive to date and seems to be going the same way as the last round.

Notwithstanding the fact that the PSAC and Treasury Board had already declared an impasse at their various bargaining tables, we clearly communicated to the CRA our sincere intention to make progress in order to conclude a new collective agreement. The CRA echoed our commitment, but during our sixth bargaining session that was held in late January, it became evident that the CRA's bargaining team either had no clear mandate or is intransigent to achieving a fair and reasonable collective agreement. A seventh session was held in early April 2019, with the assistance of a mediator, but unfortunately little real progress was achieved. To date, these seven bargaining sessions have resulted in an absence of any substantial progress. Notwithstanding this, we have agreed to a further mediated session from May 7 to 9, 2019.

Our members have been without a contract for over two years and we do not want to relive the same situation as in the last round of bargaining between the parties. Further, we do not wish to allow the collective bargaining process to impair our otherwise very amenable labour relations with the CRA and the government in power, but our members are becoming frustrated and devalued. Add to that all the problems they have endured over the past three (3) years because of the Phoenix pay system and you will understand that our people are exasperated and expect to be treated with the respect they deserve.

On behalf of our members, I respectfully ask that you give CRA a clear mandate to bargain and direct the employer's bargaining team to return to the table at the mediation session scheduled for next week with a view to negotiating a fair and reasonable collective agreement. I trust that you will agree that the conclusion of a collective agreement at the earliest opportunity will greatly benefit the parties, the Government of Canada and all Canadian citizens.

Should you wish to meet to discuss this further, I am available at your convenience.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marc Brière".

Marc Brière
National President
Union of Taxation Employees