

May 8, 2024

The Honourable Anita Anand, PC MP
President of the Treasury Board
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat
90 Elgin Street, 8th Floor
Ottawa, ON K1A 0R5

By email (president-presidente@tbs-sct.gc.ca)

Dear Minister Anand,

We are writing to express our vehement opposition and outrage at the recent decision to unilaterally amend the government's direction mandating all federal public service workers in the core public administration as well requesting compliance for federal public service workers in separate agencies to work on-site a minimum of three days per week.

Via signed letter of agreement, you explicitly acknowledged and committed to collaboration. Yet, OCHRO has brazenly flouted both its statutory and contractual obligations to labour, opting instead to engage in backroom dealings with provincial and municipal politicians, business leaders, and management. These actions reek of betrayal and contempt, completely undermining the purported respect for workers and their elected representatives that your government claims to uphold.

This decision has not only caused an uproar among our tens of thousands of public service members, but marks the pinnacle of a years-long pattern of disrespect towards bargaining agents and our fundamental right to be consulted on matters of profound significance affecting public service workers. It has shattered whatever semblance of trust and confidence remained in this government's ability to engage in fair and meaningful labour relations. Without due consideration and consultation, all federal public service workers, whether directly affected by this mandate or not, will experience a loss of trust in the government.

We demand immediate redress and accountability on the following fronts:

1. **Lack of consultation and erosion of labour relations:** The decision to unilaterally amend the workplace attendance policy demonstrates a shocking disregard for federal bargaining agents, not only due to the various signed letters of agreement, but by flouting their legal obligation under Division 3 of the *Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act*. This blatant disregard not only betrays the principles of effective labour relations but also exposes the hollowness of the Liberal government's professed commitment to collaboration and cooperation with labour.

2. **Advisory process turned imposition:** The May 1st meeting with OCHRO, ostensibly convened to discuss potential policy changes, was nothing short of a farce. Instead of meaningful dialogue, the policy was thrust upon us, with decisions made behind closed doors, devoid of any genuine input from bargaining agents. The dismissive response received from OCHRO following our legitimate concerns is utterly unacceptable.
3. **Inability to implement policies:** The one-size-fits-all approach of this policy is inadequate and negligent. Countless examples provided by our members since 2022 underscore the impracticality and ineffectiveness of the current two-to-three-day policy. Also, the notion that departments can slash office space by 50% while cranking up the minimum office presence is nothing short of a ludicrous pipe dream. It also hinges on employees continuing to consent to working from home—a voluntary act that the employer has zero authority to mandate. The government's failure to address these concerns, coupled with its vague plans for accommodating the existing footprint within an absurdly short timeframe, borders on sheer incompetence.
4. **Impact on workforce productivity and well-being:** The decision to increase workplace attendance has sparked widespread anxiety among our members. Implemented haphazardly across departments, it has left employees feeling unsupported and ill-equipped to perform their duties effectively. It also flies in the face of the employer's own data showing that 90% of departments, given the choice, had implemented a two-day-per-week minimum. Finally, several bargaining agents at home and abroad have gathered significant evidence showing the increase in productivity and work-life balance remote work provides. While boasting about being a government founded on evidence-based decision-making, not a shred of evidence has been provided or an Intersectional Gender-Based Analysis conducted on this new policy, exposing the hypocrisy of your administration's purported commitment to informed governance.
5. **Lack of trust and respect:** Your government's flagrant disregard for the principles of trust and respect is nothing short of disgraceful. The failure to consult with bargaining agents and heed the legitimate concerns of our members is a gross betrayal of the very essence of democracy and fair governance. Our members upended their lives in a show of good faith to comply with the employer's orders to work from home during the pandemic. They persisted in this arrangement despite the government's abhorrent failure to compensate them fairly and, more recently, to provide them with adequate health insurance via Canada Life.

In light of these egregious transgressions, we demand an immediate revocation of the policy change, a meeting with you, Minister Anand, and an unequivocal apology. Failure to address our grievances will precipitate a summer of discontent and unyielding labour unrest, as we fervently exercise our charter rights and freedom of association.

Thank you for your anticipated prompt attention to this matter. We expect swift action and meaningful resolution to safeguard our rights and the rights of our members.

Sincerely,

Dany Richard, President, Association of Canadian Financial Officers

David McNairn, President, Association of Justice Counsel

Nathan Prier, President, Canadian Association of Professional Employees

Justin Miller, President, Canadian Federal Pilots Association

Mark Boucher, President, Canadian Merchant Service Guild

Helen Luu, President, Canadian Military Colleges Faculty Association

Kathleen Hippen, President, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 104 (CUPE 104)

Wanda Boudreau, President, Federal Government Dockyard Chargehands Association

Yves Fournier, President, Federal Government Dockyard Trades and Labour Council (East)

Des Rogers, President, Federal Government Dockyard Trades and Labour Council (West)

Paul Cameron, Business Manager/Financial Secretary, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 2228

Pamela Isfeld, President, Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers

Eva Henshaw, A/President, Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada

Chris Aylward, President, Public Service Alliance of Canada

Bernard Holbrook, President, Research Council Employees' Association

Jacqueline Pygiel, President, Unifor, Local 2182

C: The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister

Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party