



April 21, 2016

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk,  
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Minister Mihychuk,

We are a week away from the National Day of Mourning, a day that as a country we recognize those who are killed or injured in the workplace and the importance of safety in the workplace. Meanwhile, the number of federal Health and Safety Specialists has been cut across Canada from 151 in 2005 to just 67 individuals as of April, 2015. We are concerned over the reduced number of federal Health and Safety Specialists in Canada, specifically the reduction of the number of officers for all of Northern Ontario to just two officers.

We believe it is irresponsible to reduce the number of specialists in North Ontario to just two. Two federal Health and Safety Specialists for all of Northern Ontario is not enough to cover the immense amount of territory and large number of workplaces. It raises serious question about the government's commitment to keep workplaces in the region safe.

For example, the Steelworkers Local 2020 have been waiting more than a year for a Health and Safety Specialist to visit their workplace. The local's attempts to strike a Joint Health and Safety Committee with their employer were rebuked and the need for a federal specialist to visit the site was identified. Unfortunately, the specialist in that part of the region was injured and told the local that she would be off work for some time and unable to perform an inspection. That was in March of 2015 and there has been no follow up from this individual or your department.

It is clearly a problem when it takes more than a year for an inspection. Given the experience of USW 2020, it is reasonable to state these issues exist in workplaces across the region. Additionally, the financial costs associated with unsafe workplaces affect our health care system, workplace compensation schemes, and even productivity.





It would be a fitting tribute to those we honour every April 28th if you were to ensure that the number of Federal Health and Safety Specialists will increase to the point that we can assure timely inspections and the safety of every work place in our region and in our country.

We all agree that the safety of our country, our communities, and our workers must be a top priority for all of us. We demand that you immediately address this situation and ensure that all regions of Canada are provided with enough specialists to perform this critical work in a timely manner, which is clearly not the case in Northern Ontario.

Sincerely,

Charlie Angus, MP  
Timmins- James Bay

John Vanthof, MPP  
Timiskaming – Cochrane

Carol Hughes, MP  
Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing

France Gélinas, MPP  
Nickel Belt

Michael Mantha, MPP  
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