



April 13, 2020

Dear ATU Employer/Transit Agency,

On behalf of the more than 200,000 members of the Amalgamated Transit Union who are putting their lives and livelihoods at risk to help their communities and the country survive the COVID-19 pandemic, **we are requesting that you take all actions necessary to implement the safeguards listed below to protect your workers, riders, and communities.**

To date, more than 400 ATU members have tested positive for coronavirus, many are hospitalized, hundreds are quarantined, at least 18 have passed away, and thousands more are without a paycheque.

At more than 600 properties in 44 U.S. states and nine Canadian provinces where ATU members work, these frontline workers—bus, rail, and paratransit operators, mechanics and technicians, cleaners and support staff—are **demanding proper protective equipment (PPE), social distancing practices, testing procedures, and humane leave policies.** Thousands of transit workers, especially our school bus members, are furloughed or laid off and filing for unemployment for the first time in their lives.

The Federal Government has enacted the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy program and implored private sector employers not to lay off workers. Public sector employers at all levels must lead by example and refrain from layoffs. Many employers, particularly in the public sector, are maintaining their workforces. For all employers, private and public, the message is clear: layoffs must stop now, and workers must be brought back to work.

Unfortunately, far too many employers are delivering half-measures, inadequate protections and refusing to utilize the available funds to compensate employees most affected by the layoffs and service cuts.

More than a third of our Local Unions report outright hostility from their public and private sector employers, and more than half of our Local Unions report that their employers have failed to implement critical changes needed to keep people safe, even as a second wave of this deadly virus sweeps across the continent.

We understand that it's vital for essential-trip transit service to continue during this crisis. We are proud to carry emergency service, healthcare, grocery, and retail workers, and those who need care. **But, as the Presidents of ATU International and ATU Canada, we cannot in good conscience encourage our members to go into the line of fire without the armour and provisions they need.**

Today we are calling on you and every one of the employers whose workers we represent to immediately take the following actions. Anything less will fall short of our members' right to work free from danger, imminent hazards and the specter of infection, from which they may not survive. The law and our moral obligations to protect human life requires no less.

We therefore demand that you implement the following Safe Service policies:

1. Provision of all recommended personal protective equipment to every worker, including gloves, masks, sanitizers, and all PPE needed.
2. Pandemic leave for anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19, exposed to them, or with family or childcare obligations resulting from shutdowns.
3. Compensating workers classified as essential workers during a public health crisis at least 1.5 times their normal wage.
4. Rear door entry and fare elimination to support social distancing.
5. Retention of employees and maintenance of wages and benefits during service curtailment.
6. Strategic continuation of service to avoid overcrowding.
7. Limitations on bus passenger loads to no more than 10 and paratransit to no more than 1.
8. Limiting service access to essential workers and those seeking care.
9. Requiring passengers to wear masks to board a transit vehicle.
10. Provision of fully paid, on-site testing of transit workers for COVID-19 symptoms.

Any agency or employer not adequately addressing each of these issues is putting our members, their families, our riders, and our communities at risk.

In the days ahead, we will be launching a mass education campaign to ensure our members know their rights. The Government of Canada and every single Province has strong occupational health and safety legislation which requires that all employers act proactively to take all reasonable measures to protect workers.¹

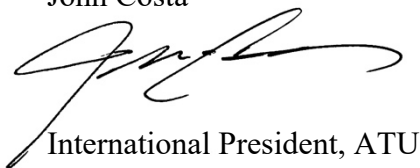
Under these provisions, no employer can discharge or retaliate against any employee who refuses to perform unsafe work. ATU has no interest in disrupting critical transit service, but we will defend to the maximum degree any ATU member who exercises their rights should an employer put them in imminent danger.

I urge you in the strongest terms to work with your ATU Local Union leadership to implement these life-saving protections and policies.

The money is there. The time for excuses is over. The time for action is now.

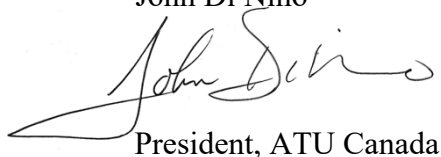
Sincerely,

John Costa



International President, ATU

John Di Nino



President, ATU Canada

¹ Canada, *Canada Labour Code*; Ontario, *Occupational Health and Safety Act*; Quebec, *Act Respecting Occupational Health And Safety*; British Columbia, *Workers' Compensation Act (Occupational Health and Safety Regulation)*; Alberta, *Occupational Health and Safety Act*; Manitoba, *Workplace Safety and Health Act*; Saskatchewan, *Saskatchewan Employment Act*; Nova Scotia, *Occupational Health and Safety Act*; New Brunswick, *Occupational Health and Safety Act*; Newfoundland and Labrador, *Occupational Health and Safety Act*; Prince Edward Island, *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.