



Representing our members from coast to coast in solidarity.
One Voice. One Canada. One ATU!

Executive Board

April 3, 2020

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The Honourable Blaine Higgs, Premier of New Brunswick

The Honourable Bill Oliver, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honourable Hugh Flemming, Minister of Health

The Honourable Trevor Holder, Minister of Labour

Centennial Building

PO Box 6000

Fredericton NB E3B 5H1

Dear Premier and Ministers,

Re: Public Transit Workers forgotten and remain at risk amid COVID-19

As COVID-19 continues to spread across Canada, our frontline workers in Public Transit have been forgotten and remain at risk – and they are worried. These workers have not been provided personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves – yet they continue to work – moving the general public, including essential workers in healthcare, emergency services, grocery, pharmacy and more. These employees have no way to protect themselves and have a right to protective masks and gloves, just like other public service workers.

A Call For Help!

As all levels of government continue to urge people to stay home, and to keep a two-meter distance from others while out, this is not always possible within the confined space of our buses which puts drivers at greater risk. We have already experienced a rising number of COVID-19 infections and deaths among transit workers – and we need your immediate help.

In addition to providing frontline transit workers with PPE, the drastic reduction in ridership across the country will result in a great number of lay-offs. As a result, we have attached our key demands from all provinces to protect transit workers through this crisis.



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While ridership is down by 75% or more across the country, public transit remains a critical service for so many people who rely on it to get to work, hospitals, pharmacies, and grocery stores. In some parts of the country, the transit system is also used to deliver blood and blood bi-products to hospitals. We must protect our public transit systems from crumbling – which is why we need immediate help from both Federal and Provincial governments working together to maintain payroll and benefits in the transit industry through comprehensive stimulus packages.

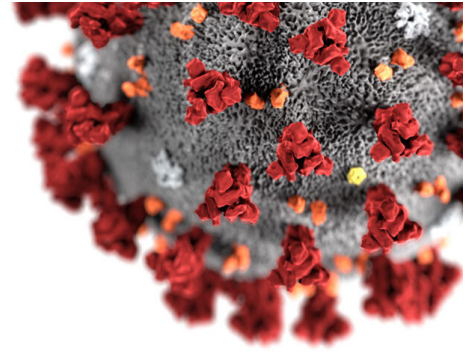
We have already sent a letter to the Cabinet Committee on COVID-19 in Ottawa and are in discussions with them. We would like to have similar discussions with the provincial governments. Please see the attached list, and we look forward to your response.

ATU Canada represents 34,000 transit professionals in the motor coach, public transit, private contractors, vehicle operations and maintenance work across Canada. ATU Canada is part of ATU International, which has over 200,000 union members across North America.

Sincerely,

John Di Nino
ATU Canada President
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PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION AND PREMIERS CAN PROTECT TRANSIT WORKERS BY PROVIDING:



1. Emergency funding for transit systems to offset increased costs and lost revenue.

- Ensure transit agencies are reimbursed for increased operating costs and lost revenue during the crisis.
- Ensure that all available funds for transit agencies can be flexed and applied to urgent service needs, workforce protection, and long-term workforce retention.

2. Priority distribution of PPE to frontline transit system workers.

- Official recognition of transit workers as “front-line” to make them eligible for increased protections.
- Additional funds for the purchase and distribution of N95 mask, gloves, goggles and other necessary PPE.
- Additional funds for cleaning and disinfecting of vehicles, workspaces, and high touch areas throughout transit systems and workplaces.

3. Job Protection in the event of lay-offs as a result of COVID-19.

- Guaranteed recall and full wage benefit payments to workers during lay-off period.

4. 100% paid sick leave.

- At least 15 days of paid sick leave for all workers in the event they are exposed or believed to have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Paid at their regular rate of pay.
- Guaranteed job protection for the duration of the quarantine order.
- Waive requirements to provide doctor’s note for eligibility.

5. Continue paying motor coach staff and school bus workers during school closures.

- Demand that motor coach employees are guaranteed crew values or mileage allowance.
- Demand that school bus operators get paid crew values until the end of the school year

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