

November 16th, 2011

Honourable Marilyn More
Minister of Labour and Advanced Education
P.O. Box 697
5151 Terminal Road
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T8

Dear Minister More:

The Halifax Chamber of Commerce has been actively voicing our concerns over introducing First Contract Arbitration (FCA) here in Nova Scotia. We are writing to re-state those concerns. The Chamber has been doing research on the arguments both for and against the use of First Contract Arbitration, including a preliminary survey of its members. Of our members that participated in the survey, over 75% indicated they were not in favor of amending the Trade Union Act to include First Contract Arbitration.

To date, we have not been provided with a satisfactory rationale for why FCA is needed here in Nova Scotia. We have an excellent labour and workforce environment, experiencing one of the fewest numbers of lost days due to strikes or lockouts in all of Canada.

With that in mind, and to support our labour and workforce environment, we feel the following areas would be more constructive issues the Labour Management Review Committee (LMRC) could focus on rather than implementing FCA in our province. These would include the following:

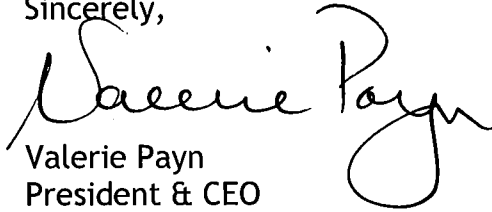
- Evaluating our labour relations experiences, including the performance of the Labour Board, and establishing best practices and benchmarks.
- Reviewing the role of conciliation services with a view to providing support earlier in the process of negotiation of a first collective agreement.
- Exploring whether the Trade Union Act should give the Labour Board the ability to make interim decisions.

We request that the Labour Management Review Committee's report regarding their recommendations to government be made publicly available. This is very much in line with the degree of openness and transparent accountability when addressing labour relations in Nova Scotia that was referenced when the LMRC was created.

We strongly feel government's focus should be on growing our economy and the objectives outlined in our provincial economic strategy jobsHere.

Thank you very much for considering our views, and I look forward to discussing them with you further, should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Valerie Payn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the name.

Valerie Payn
President & CEO

Copy: Premier Darrell Dexter
Jamie Baillie
~~Stephen MacNeil~~
NDP MLA's