NATIONAL
CATTLE FEEDERS'
ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION
NATIONALE DES
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Chair and Members
Special Legislative Committee on Bill C-39
House of Commons, Ottawa
Via: CC39@parl.gc.ca

Re: Bill C-39, Building Canada Strong Act — submission from the National Cattle Feeders Association

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Cattle Feeders Association (NCFA), I am writing to share our sector's perspective on Bill C-39, the *Building Canada Strong Act*, as you prepare for clause-by-clause consideration. We welcome the Government of Canada's efforts to strengthen national competitiveness through more efficient project approvals, improved transportation infrastructure, and a modernized federal labour framework.

NCFA is the voice of Canada's cattle feeders and works to improve the growth, sustainability, and competitiveness of cattle production across Canada. Canada's beef industry contributes $9.7 billion in farm cash receipts annually, contributes $21.8 billion to national GDP annually and accounts for 347,000 jobs, each one of which supports another 3.9 jobs elsewhere in the economy.

Cattle feeders are an important part of Canada's agricultural economy and rural communities, supporting local businesses, employment, and the broader beef supply chain. Our members depend on competitive input costs, dependable transportation networks, and predictable federal policies to operate and grow. Bill C-39 presents an opportunity to address these priorities and strengthen the conditions needed for Canada's beef industry to remain competitive in domestic and international markets.

Feedlots rely on transportation networks to bring feed grain and other essential inputs to their operations and to move cattle to processors and beef products to domestic and international markets. Work stoppages affecting rail or port operations create a double impact for cattle feeders: limiting the availability and increasing the cost of critical production inputs, while also disrupting access to markets. These disruptions can increase costs for producers and consumers, compromise supply chain reliability, and have serious implications for animal welfare. For cattle feeders, the risks are not theoretical. The scale of the industry's reliance on rail transportation illustrates just how quickly a disruption can affect feed availability and animal welfare.

There are over one million head of cattle on feed in Alberta and Saskatchewan, illustrating the scale of the industry's reliance on dependable feed transportation, much of which is transported by rail. In Alberta alone the province requires nine to ten trains per week delivering feed. Replacing that volume by truck would require more than 1,000 super-B trucks per week, an option that is not feasible given the chronic shortage of truck drivers. With limited on-farm storage, producers plan feed supplies week to week around rail schedules, and even brief delays can put animal welfare at risk.

NCFA recognizes the right of Canadians to strike and the invaluable service that workers in federally regulated transportation provide every day. But the impacts of transportation labour disruptions extend well beyond the bargaining table, threatening domestic food security and food affordability, farm viability, animal welfare, rural economies, and the

global customer relationships Canadian agriculture spends years building. When strikes delay delivery, our credibility with customers is eroded and contracts are put at risk.

NCFA recommends that the application of the national interest test explicitly recognize the importance of agricultural supply chains, including the movement of essential production inputs, livestock, and beef products. The economic consequences of these disruptions, as well as their potential implications for food security and animal welfare, should be considered when determining whether a labour disruption adversely affects the national interest.

Clear recognition of these impacts would provide greater certainty that significant disruptions to rail and port operations can be addressed before they cause lasting harm to agricultural businesses, the broader beef sector, and Canada's ability to reliably serve its markets.

NCFA supports efforts to reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers, improve coordination across federal departments, and deliver timely, predictable decisions. We encourage the federal government to embed an agricultural lens in the implementation of these measures and work directly with cattle feeders, agricultural businesses, and rural community leaders. Canada’s cattle feeders are important contributors to Canada’s economy, supporting jobs, local businesses, and the broader beef supply chain. Recognizing cattle feeders as partners in investment, innovation, and growth will strengthen the competitiveness of Canada’s beef industry and the long-term prosperity of the economy.

We would welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee or provide further detail.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Brad Deleeuw
Chair, National Cattle Feeders’ Association