

November 23, 2011

The Right Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., B.A. < M.A.
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Mr. Harper,

On behalf of the National Council of Women of Canada, may I express our dismay with the introduction of Bill C-18 in Parliament. A Bill which we believe, aims to dismantle the “single desk” marketing of wheat and barley by the long-established and very respected Canadian Wheat Board [CWB].

We are particularly disturbed that your government failed to hold a democratic farmer vote on this vital issue, as required by the Canadian Wheat Board Act. In contrast, a CWB farmer plebiscite was held which showed that the majority of wheat and barley farmers wished to retain the CWB single- desk marketing system.

As Canadians are becoming increasingly aware a small group of companies has gained control over food supply and is generating huge profits, at the same time as farm income has declined. Canadian farmers find it increasingly difficult to compete on an uneven playing field with countries where there are lower agricultural and labour standards.

NCWC believes that the enactment of Bill C-18 will lead to the eventual dismantling of the CWB, the only marketing entity for wheat and barley which can compete with the large international companies such as the US based Cargill.

The CWB is the only entity which can capture broad markets, provide a decent price and guarantee payments to farmers. Without it farmers, particularly small farmers, will be in the hands of an international consortium of companies and subjected to lower internationally-competitive prices and greater risk. Churchill, Manitoba and other communities which rely on the economic stimulus of the CWB will suffer a significant loss of jobs. This will exacerbate an already difficult economic decline in western farm communities.

Like other farm marketing boards across Canada the CWB has operated for many years in the best interest of farmers, communities and indeed all Canadians, to help ensure national food security.

Food security is of grave concern to the NCWC members. At the 118th Annual General Meeting in Winnipeg, in June 2011, a resolution was approved that supported the absolute need for “Canadian Food Security”. Members, from across Canada urged your government “to ensure sustainable production, processing and



distribution [of food] which would build long-term sustainable farm incomes for both small and large enterprises” and “recognize that supply management systems help stabilize the supply of high quality food for all Canadians..”

In closing , we respectfully ask that you consider the views of the National Council of Women, which advocates only on which it has established policy, a Council which represents 19 nationally Federated organizations, with provincial Council federates in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec, 14 local Councils in Nova Scotia and across Canada with study groups in Prince Edward Isle and Oakville, Ontario.

Sincerely,

Denise Mattok, President,
National Council of Women of Canada.

c.c. The Hon. Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture
Nycole Turmel, N.D.P. Leader of the Opposition
Bob Rae, Liberal Party Leader.