



*For Immediate Release*

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## **Wheat Growers call for Open Consultative Process On Sale of Hopper Cars**

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association (WCWGA) is calling on the federal government to engage in a public consultation process to evaluate all options for the disposal of the federal hopper car fleet.

“We understand the two major railways and the Farmer Rail Car Coalition have each submitted acquisition proposals,” says Randy Hoback, Chair of the WCWGA. “We believe it is in the farmers’ interest, and also in the public interest, to have each proposal evaluated through a transparent process, so the concerns of farmers and all other industry players are properly addressed.”

In a letter to the Hon. Jean-C. Lapierre, federal Transport Minister, the Wheat Growers recommend the consultation process take place either through the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport, or through the appointment of an eminent person.

The Canadian government has indicated that it plans to divest its fleet of approximately 13,000 hopper cars, which accounts for almost half of the western grain car fleet. The cars are estimated to have a value of approximately \$200 million. The Wheat Growers are urging the federal government to engage in a transparent, consultative process before any decision on disposition is made.

The WCWGA believes an open consultative process will allow the concerns of all affected parties to be received and considered. The Association believes each proposal should be evaluated in terms of its impact on freight rates; system efficiency; access to shipping capacity; maintenance and replacement of the fleet; and trade sanctions now imposed by the United States.

Hoback says the Wheat Growers will support any initiative to improve the movement of grain while keeping costs down to a minimum. “We look forward to working with government in finding those solutions that will lead to a more efficient, cost-effective grain transportation system.”

The WCWGA, an independent producer organization, has spent 34 years bringing forth innovative farmer-driven solutions and will continue to lobby on behalf of forward thinking, progressive producers in an effort to make farming sustainable and profitable.

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***Innovative, farmer-driven solutions.***