

## **Farmer-Industry Partnership disappointed in hopper car announcement**

**March 15, 2005** – Members of the Farmer-Industry Partnership (FIP) are disappointed with the federal government's announcement that it intends to proceed with negotiations to transfer the federal hopper car fleet to the Farmer Rail Car Coalition (FRCC).

The announcement comes despite the recent report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport which recommended the government issue a Request for Proposals before making any decision on disposal of the hopper cars.

The Committee's report on the matter, released February 21, recommended the government consider several disposal options including proposals put forward by FIP, FRCC, CN Rail, and CP Rail. The Committee also noted that retention of the cars by the government was also a valid option to consider.

FIP is urging the federal government to reconsider its announcement and to follow the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Transport, so that the interests of all farmers and other industry stakeholders are taken into account in any disposal option.

If the government decides to proceed with negotiations with FRCC, FIP is seeking to ensure that those negotiations are expanded to include all stakeholders in the grain handling and transportation system, including farmers that are not represented through FRCC.

Members of FIP are concerned that any move to transfer the cars to FRCC will result in another layer of administration, and will create a more adversarial and more costly grain transportation system, where cars may be apportioned on the basis of political or non-market considerations.

Regardless of any government decision to dispose of the cars, the goal of FIP members will be to ensure growers and shippers in all regions, and of all crops, will continue to have access to grain transportation capacity on the basis of commercial principles.

Members of the Farmer-Industry Partnership include the Saskatchewan Canola Growers Association, Western Barley Growers Association, Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, Canadian Special Crops Association, Inland Terminal Association of Canada, and the Western Grain Elevator Association.

For further information, please contact:

Doug Campbell  
WCWGA  
(403) 932-6866

Albert Wagner  
WBGA  
(780) 963-7753

Darin Egert  
SCGA  
(306) 937-2005