



CAW ROAD TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

#326 – 12th Street

New Westminster, BC

V3M 4H6

President	1 st Vice-President	2 nd Vice-President	Financial/Recording Secretary
Bill Gaucher	Steve Sutherland	Don Lajoie	Trevor Alway
Local 114	Local 111	Local 4209	Local 4050

December 3rd, 2009

Presidents Report for the CAW Road Transport Council Meeting on
December 3rd, 2009 in Toronto Ontario

Dear Brothers and Sisters;

As the newly elected President of the Road Transport Council I would like to thank you for your support and would like to offer this written report to our first meeting after the elections which were held in April of this year.

I would also like to congratulate and recognize the other Executive members who were elected at our April 16th meeting in Port Elgin, Ontario.

Brother Steve Sutherland from CAW Local 111 (British Columbia) as our 1st Vice-President, Brother Don Lajoie from CAW Local 4209 (Manitoba) as our 2nd Vice-President and Brother Trevor Alway from CAW Local 4050 (Alberta) as our Financial/Recording Secretary.

Under our CAW-RTC By-Laws Article 2 – “Executive Members-At-Large”. I appointed the following members as our “Members-At-Large”.

Brother Russ Lucking CAW 4268 (Ontario),

Brother Jim Connelly CAW Local 4050 (Alberta) and

Brother Gordon McGrath CAW Local 114 (British Columbia).

Since our last meeting, many of our Brothers and Sisters have had their yearly earnings reduced through job sharing, reduced workloads or even layoffs.

Through the strong leadership of the CAW, we resist the tendency of the industry to drive down compensation and work standards, especially during economic downturns in our industry.

However, in British Columbia and I'm sure in other parts of the country as well, bargaining has been very difficult in our sector and in many cases short term agreements have been negotiated in hopes of a better economy down the road and in some instances the employer(s) have asked to have negotiated raises suspended or rolled-back. These economic times have created enormous stresses on our bargaining committees just to maintain what we have already bargained and to keep the gains negotiated for the future.

At our CAW Constitutional Convention in August of this year there was a "Sector Profile" done up on Road Transportation and I would like to share some of the comments within that profile report.

Moving Forward: Developing the Road Transport Sector

Road transportation is vitally important to the economic lifeblood of Canada. Can you imagine what would happen to the whole economy if road travel suddenly stopped? Chaos, congestion, and gridlock. So the people who work in this sector perform an essential service for all of us, delivering people and goods within communities and between them. Moreover, given the inherent risks of road transport and highway travel, public safety depends on those services being provided in a professional, high-quality manner.

Unfortunately, the powerful forces of private market competition tend to push the whole sector in the direction of always reducing costs, downgrading service, and cheapening labour. Excess capacity is a chronic weakness experienced in the freight hauling, courier, and taxi businesses. Fly-by-night operators try to penetrate the market by offering still lower prices – but at the expense of their underpaid workers, and with dubious impacts on the safety and quality of the services.

The wages in this sector are all over the map. This is not at all a fair recognition of the importance, the dangers, and the stress involved in this work. Wages are higher in some segments (such as larger freight and courier firms, and public transit operators). But they are even lower in many road transport occupations – well below what is required to raise a family. The assumption is that as long as someone has a driver's license, they can just be thrown into a job for a low wage, without training, proper equipment, or safety standards. This is a terrible way to run a business that is so crucial to our national prosperity and well-being.

All of us in this sector need to fight to have drivers treated as valued professionals, rather than as low-wage hired hands. This partly requires striving through collective bargaining to raise the wages, benefits, and working conditions of the sector, and to close off the “low-road” option that will be the natural first choice of most private operators. But it also means improving the overall economic conditions of the sector: limiting overcapacity; pushing suppliers to invest more in modern, high-quality equipment; to raise safety and quality standards; to spend more on training and retention, instead of treating drivers as a cheap throw-away resource. In the private sector this will also require stronger government regulations on safety and working conditions. In public transit we continue to fight for adequate investments in new equipment and services to meet our growing need (both social and environmental) for high-quality urban mass transit.

What can we do as a Road Transport Council?

We can look at the Major Sector Development Issues as outlined in the Sector Profile:

- Promote stronger safety and labour standards through government regulation, including more effective hours of work limits.
- Resist the tendency of the industry to drive down compensation and work standards, especially during economic downturns when there is too much capacity in the industry.
- Protect public ownership in urban transportation; expand investments in public transit to improve service and reduce pollution from passenger car use in cities.

I would also like to report on some activities that I have been involved with on behalf of our Council.

I have been involved with conference calls (along with other representatives from our various road transport locals) with Nick De-Carlo from our National Health & Safety Department to discuss what issues the “Environment and our Road Transport Sector” could bring together in a discussion forum at the Environmental Conference. We also discussed and committed to arrange to have some members from the Road Transport Section who would attend the Environment Conference on June 5th – 7th, 2009 at the CAW Family Education Centre. Our Road Transport Council also authorized to cover the cost for one member to attend this conference.

CAW had James Savage who was interning this summer at the CAW National Office doing some research for The Road Transport Section on

“Working on a Green Job Creation Strategy for Our Road Transport Section”. We had some great input from many locals and hopefully one of our delegates who attended this conference can give a report at our meeting in December.

The next event that I was involved with was our Annual CAW-ITF Campaign which was held during October 7th through 9th. I had conversations with John Aman, Murray Gore and Len Poirier through the organizing department to get approval to have National share some of the costs for taking members off the job to do the CAW-ITF Campaign again this year and the organizing department came through for us as they always do. Thanks Len for all your support and input for this campaign.

Our strategy this year was also changed to be centered and focusing on organizing and we developed with the assistance of Robin Fairchild at National Office a pamphlet to hand out this year during our ITF Campaign. The theme was “Get on the Road to a Better Future”. This pamphlet was well designed and was (and is) a useful tool for our canvassers and it was designed to be used throughout the year on organizing in the Road Transport Sector. I will make sure copies are available at our meeting for everyone to see and have.

I have also compiled the Annual CAW - ITF Report under a separate handout, it includes information on the International Transport Workers’ Federation and the individual reports of our canvassers and reports from all over the globe on the action days. Please take the time to read the report and especially the comments from those who worked on the campaign from Local’s 114, 4268 and 4457.

I have also proposed that we change our RTC By-Laws Article #2, so that we can have more participation from our Locals that pay per capita dues to the RTC. These changes will allow each local to have a Member-At-Large that they choose to represent their local on our Council. The original elected structure remains the same and the President of the RTC also has the ability to appoint 3 Members-At-Large as well.

I truly believe that expanding our executive will be a more inclusive structure and bring more locals in to participate. A copy of this By-Law change is included in the Financial Report package that will be presented by our Financial/Recording Secretary Trevor Alway.

I have also taken the initiative and direction from our last meeting to have Jim Sadlemyer (one of my Local 114 Executive members) setup a website for our Road Transport Council. This website is currently under construction and should be completed by our meeting in December.

The web address is: <http://www.cawrtc.com/>



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UNDER CONSTRUCTION



Our Executive also authorized me to have some CAW RTC toques done up for our meeting in December that we hope you will enjoy wearing on those cold day's and nights that are ahead of us. These are a great visual item to promote and show recognition to our CAW Road Transport Council.

We are getting some price quotes for window stickers and I will report on those at our next meeting as well.

We will also be having an updated report on our Health & Safety Manual for Transport Workers from the CAW National Health & Safety Department. This is something that has been in the works for quit some time now and I'm hoping it is close to being completed. Thank you to all of you who have been giving input towards it.

In closing, I look forward to working with our CAW Local's in the Road Transport Council to share information about our industry and to try to harmonize contractual language where ever possible, and to work with individual Local's for the mutual interest of the rank and file.

We need to discuss and plan ways to implement and lobby for improvements to the National Safety Code, Federal/Provincial Statues and Regulations pertaining to the Road Transportation Sector for which our members work in.

We need to look at building coalitions in our Local and International communities such as the ITF to further our objectives and assisting in those campaigns that mirror our own Industry and Sectors.

We need to discuss and if needed establish sub-sector committee chairpersons within the Road Transport Council to address the needs of specific sectors such as but not limited to; Transit, School Bus, Motor Coach, Trucking, Owner Operator(s), Taxi(s), Storage and Moving, Distribution Centre(s), Armored Car and Courier Industries.

We need to work with the CAW National Organizing Department to establish contacts within the Industry in the hopes of organizing more members into our union and especially into our sector.

We need to lobby our own CAW National to help facilitate a Road Transport Conference which is long overdue and should be held in 2010 in my view.

We established the Road and Transport Council to address all of these concerns and they are also contained in our By-Laws "Article # 1 Purpose".

We have a lot of work to do and it can not be done by one or two individuals everyone needs to take an active role within this council if we are to achieve our goals.

Yours truly,



Bill Gaucher
President
CAW Road Transport Council