



August 15, 2022

Board of Directors
Metrolinx
97 Front Street West,
Toronto, ON M5J 1E6

To the chair of the board and members of the board of Metrolinx,

I am writing you today to draw your attention to the fact that Metrolinx has been inadvertently embroiled by one of its suppliers in a lock-out aimed at a group of vulnerable gig workers – at odds with the current policy priorities of the Government of Ontario.

I request that you and the Metrolinx board take action to correct this.

Your principal advertising agency, Leo Burnett, led by President and CEO Ben Tarr, is currently locking-out professional performers belonging to the ACTRA union who appear in commercials.

Following the poor advice of a small industry association to which Leo Burnett belongs, Mr. Tarr is now significantly reducing wages for performers, and offering them no benefits or funds for their retirement. The unionized performers he has locked out, in contrast, enjoyed benefits and were members of a multi-employer benefit plan.

As you are likely aware, making gig work even more precarious is entirely at variance with the policy priorities of Metrolinx's owner, the Government of Ontario. It has clearly laid out the need for fair compensation for gig workers; and for multi-employer benefit plans exactly like the one Mr. Tarr and his colleagues sought to dismantle in bargaining--along with a 60% cut to wages. When the union understandably refused, Mr. Tarr locked unionized workers out.

There is no justification for this lockout.

At a time of high inflation, the grotesque cut to compensation being pursued here is out of line.

At a time when government is considering intervention in this part of the labour market, employers are not looking to create new issues with gig workers – for example, by breaking their pensions and benefits.

And a time when people are returning to work after a lengthy COVID lockdown, enterprises do not want to be branded as bad employers.

Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists

ACTRA

National Office

625 Church Street · Suite 300 · Toronto ON M4Y 2G1

Toll free 1-800-387-3516 · Tel (416) 489-1311

Fax (416) 489-8076 · E-mail national@actra.ca · www.actra.ca

Affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)

and the International Federation of Actors (FIA)

Branch Offices: Vancouver · Calgary · Regina · Winnipeg

Toronto · Ottawa · Montreal · Halifax · St. John's

But that is exactly what Leo Burnett, on poor advice, is doing to Metrolinx. Your advertising agency is embroiling you in the kind of conduct bad employers engaged in a hundred years ago.

I urge Metrolinx to direct Leo Burnett to end the lockout it is conducting in your name. And to inform this Metrolinx supplier that if it does not do so, its business relationship with Metrolinx – a unionized public employer – will be reviewed.

Please act on this issue.

I will shortly be in touch with you and the members of your board to discuss these issues.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marie Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marie Kelly
National Executive Director
ACTRA

cc: Ben Tarr, President & CEO, Leo Burnett Canada
Ron Lund, President & CEO, Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA)