



UNITED ASSOCIATION
of Journeymen & Apprentices of the
PLUMBING & PIPEFITTING
Industry of the United States and Canada
Local Union 170 – Affiliated with AFL-CIO-CFL

1658 FOSTERS WAY, DELTA, BC, V3M 6S6
Tel: 604.526.0441 | Fax: 604.526.6261
Toll Free: 1.888.223.7711
info@ualocal170.com
ualocal170.com

April 9, 2020

The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development &
Disability Inclusion
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

CARLA.QUALTROUGH@PARL.GC.CA

Dear Minister:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Local 170's membership; approximately 4,000 Steamfitters, Plumbers, Sprinklerfitters and Welders. We are part of BC's Building Trades; 35,000 unionized members from 25 local craft unions, with most facing the issues outlined below. The majority of our trades have been deemed essential by our provincial government and our members have continued to work where possible, during this pandemic.

We appreciate the hard work of government in providing critical supports for workers adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The deployment of the CERB program in such a short timeframe is a welcome relief for many; however, it has had some unintended results, particularly for our members working in the construction industry. Our industry is both seasonal and cyclical with many of our members experiencing layoffs due to non-COVID-19 reasons. The challenges our members are experiencing:

- Members who have applied for EI Regular benefits are being automatically re-directed to the CERB benefit even though they are EI eligible, and their layoff is non COVID-19 related. CERB provides a lower benefit than the maximum Regular EI benefit which our members would normally be entitled to; and
- Many of our members who would have been entitled to a **Supplemental Unemployment Benefit Plan** benefit while in receipt of regular EI Regular benefits are now finding themselves ineligible for SUB Plan benefits. In an effort to assist our members during this difficult time, our trustees last month temporarily increased the Supplemental Unemployment benefit payment for two months; only to have most of our members now ineligible.

At this most critical time, our members are now faced with a lower benefit and unable to access their SUB plan benefits. We request that you review and make necessary amendments to upcoming Regulations or legislation to address these unintended results and allow the application of SUB plans to the CERB.

Thank you for all your efforts in supporting our essential workers during this pandemic.

Sincerely,

A.D. Al Phillips, RSE
Business Manager & Financial Secretary