



**your
voice at work**

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United Food and Commercial Workers Canada Union, Local No. 401

November 20, 2020

Via Email & Mail

The Honourable Jason Kenney
Premier of Alberta
Office of the Premier
307 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6
Email: premier@gov.ab.ca

Dear Premier Kenney:

Today we write you, as the representatives of 32,000 private sector employees, because we have been shaken to the core by two basic facts. The first is that we have for the second time in the space of a week identified more than 1,000 new COVID-19 cases in a single day. The second is that Alberta is the only province in Canada that has not made masks mandatory in public areas.

We are now facing exponential spread of a virus that has already taken our members' lives, and the lack of masking rules is putting our members' lives at risk every day they go to work providing Albertans with food production and retail grocery services. Your government has deemed our members' work to be essential in this pandemic. We implore you to give them the protections they deserve in the workplace by instituting province-wide, mandatory public masking.

In light of the new Labour Code provisions introduced by Bill 32, our union has made it policy to decline from engaging in political activity, such as writing this public letter. But the moral imperative presented by this threat of exponential growth and the need to save our members from a clear, present, and preventable threat to life and limb compels us to take this exceptional step. We hope this moral imperative also compels you to act in an exceptional way.

Premier, lives are at stake. There is no time to wait. We cannot rely on private sector employers to enforce rules that your government will not. Please take action today to stop the spread of COVID-19 with a mandatory public masking policy that will provide every worker in Alberta with a fighting chance to stay safe when they go to work, and the peace of mind that their government was willing to give them this most basic protective measure.

Sincerely,

Thomas Hesse
President

Richelle Stewart
Executive Secretary-Treasurer

United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 401

cc: Sean Naldrett, Director, Labour Relations – SMO & BC, Sobeys West Inc. -Safeway Operations
Roger Bockstael, Senior Director, Industrial Relations and EDS – AB & NWT, Westfair Foods Ltd.
All Alberta Employers
Rachel Notley, Leader, Alberta's NDP Opposition