

**JAGMEET SINGH**

DÉPUTÉ | MP, BURNABY SOUTH | BURNABY-SUD

December 13, 2021

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos  
Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Duclos,

It is with great concern that I write to you about the situation at Pacific Gateway Hotel in Vancouver affecting the livelihoods of hard-hit hotel workers and members of UNITE HERE Local 40. Pacific Gateway is one of the quarantine hotels recently cited in The Globe and Mail for its “wretched” conditions experienced by travelers returning from Africa. That is matched by the terrible treatment of Pacific Gateway workers on the government’s watch.

Pacific Gateway was one of a dozen sites taken over by the federal government under the Quarantine Act as a designated quarantine facility (DQF). Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) contracted the Red Cross and others to provide food delivery services and cleaning, displacing some long-term hotel staff. Although this is a temporary takeover, Pacific Gateway terminated 143 workers, mostly women and immigrant workers who have up to 40+ years of experience on the job.

And, while the pandemic continues to hurt workers, Unite Here Local 40 members have informed me that the hotel will not commit to return terminated staff to their jobs and wants to roll back wages to the minimum wage, eliminate their health and pension plans, and make other significant changes that would erode these living wage jobs. Pacific Gateway workers have been on strike since May 3, 2021.

This is clearly unacceptable. That the government is continuing to give millions in public funds to a company while its workers are on strike and continues to hire contractors that cross their picket line, does not show your commitment to support workers and the work of unions.

This was brought to the attention of former Health Minister Patty Hajdu, whose staff promised to investigate, and former PHAC President Iain Stewart. Despite the impact on workers, PHAC repeatedly extended its agreement with the hotel. Workers are urging the government to move out of the hotel immediately and to not renew beyond December 2021.

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I add my voice to those that are demanding the federal government move out of the Pacific Gateway Hotel immediately. I am adding my voice to Unite Here Local 40 members who deserve to be part of the economic recovery and the right to return to their jobs.

To date, the government has not taken action to resolve this situation. I implore you to update the union and to act on their requests to move out of Pacific Gateway Hotel this month. I also urge you to use every available tool at your disposal to urge the hotel to reinstate workers to their jobs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jagmeet Singh".

Jagmeet Singh, MP  
Burnaby South  
Leader, New Democratic Party of Canada

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Davies".

Don Davies, MP  
Vancouver Kingsway  
NDP Health Critic

cc. The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Labour  
Harpreet Kochhar, President, Public Health Agency of Canada