



April 20, 2020

Mr. Brian Ellis
Assistant Deputy Minister, Labour Relations
Manitoba Civil Service Commission
811 – 155 Carlton Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 3H8

Mr. Ellis,

The Institute acknowledges the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on society and is prepared to collaborate with the Government of Manitoba in its efforts to alleviate the financial impact of the current crisis on the Province.

Further to Thursday's discussion, and following consultation with the Institute authorities and MAGE group President and Vice-President we are currently unable to offer any concrete solution to your request for assistance. We do have questions in regards to two (2) of the three (3) options proposed:

Option #2 – Voluntary Reduced Workweeks

The Institute is not opposed to the option but is wondering why capping the VRWs at 35 days? Have you considered extending the period to 50 or 60 days? What is being proposed is based on the assumption that all 35,000 employees would agree to a maximum 35 VRWs. We believe many will not necessarily accept this reduction while others might be interested in a longer period. We will not know until receiving feedbacks from our members.

Option #3 – Work sharing

The Institute is also not opposed to this option. However, we will first need to know if this option is actually applicable to public sector employees. Furthermore, we need details on how this option would be implemented. Would employees be asked to work 2 or 3 days per week? Would this be determined on the basis of "essential services"? How is "essential services" defined? How many MAGE members are included in this definition?

Other options

We are open to other solutions if feasible and acceptable to the Government. Measures such as early voluntary retirement deferred buy-outs might be considered. Any other cost saving measures as per the MAGE collective agreement shall also be entertained before proceeding with any of the Government options proposed.

Before we are in a position to propose any solution, we must first consult with our members as per the group and PIPSC by-laws. This can be done rapidly if required.

Any measure to be agreed to by the parties and implemented shall also be on a voluntary basis. The Institute opposes any measure that might be imposed on MAGE members without their direct consent.

In addition, no measure implemented shall result in loss of years of service or negatively impact pension and benefits coverage. We must also have the guarantee that, should there be any loss of position in this process, no MAGE position will be replaced by external consultants once the situation returns to normal.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss the above. We are committed to helping the Province any way we can and to the extent possible.

Sincerely,

Pierre Ouellet
Negotiator
PIPSC

Cc: Harald Larsen, MAGE group President
Tanya Cole, Acting Director, Labour Relations