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Employers Seek Improvements at Labour Relations Board

--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 4th, 2007, St. John's, NL – A recent survey conducted by the Newfoundland and Labrador Employers' Council has determined that while employers in this province are generally satisfied with the function and decisions made by the Labour Relations Board, there is still room for improvement. In fact, 86 percent of employer respondents feel that the decisions made by the Board are neutral, fair and reasonable, with minor dissatisfaction cited with pro-union decisions, irrelevance to industry, and unnecessary delays.

The Labour Relations Board is an independent, quasi-judicial body consisting of a Chairperson, Vice Chairpersons, and Board Members with equal representation from employer and employee representatives. The Board meets regularly to review and determine applications for union certification and revocation; unfair labour practices; successor rights; imposition of first collective agreements; complaints related to the duty of fair representation, and other issues within its jurisdiction. Decisions are based on the review of investigative reports and written submission by the parties, or by a hearing, if necessary.

Almost two-thirds of respondents feel the decisions that have been made by the Board over the last three years have been made in a timely manner. Only six percent feel that the Board has been responsible for delays, with the majority of respondents attributing the delays to legal counsel for one or both parties, or a combination of legal counsel and Board schedules.

The survey also brought forth areas of dissatisfaction and areas for improvement for the Board and for the system specifically. Over half of respondents feel the Board lacked appropriate authority in some areas, particularly with regards to cease and desist orders. Employers also highlighted the need for reduced delays, the need for increased awareness of the Labour Relations Board and its role, as well as the removal of automatic certification as a penalty for unfair labour practices.

The Newfoundland & Labrador Employers' Council is the lead business advocacy group on labour and employment-related issues in this province.

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