



VIA must obey Arbitrator's order to restore free travel

On August 4, Arbitrator Christopher Albertyn directed VIA Rail to “restore free transportation privileges” for spouses and dependents of Unifor Council 4000 employees and retirees. VIA has not yet obeyed that order.

For your information, the award is posted on Council 4000's website at unifor4000.com. We are in the process of having this award translated to French.

On August 5, the Union asked VIA to send an urgent message to all employees and retirees informing them that their family members could once again book free travel in Economy. That didn't happen.

For many people, this is prime holiday and travel season. So on August 11, we asked VIA to guarantee that anyone who does pay for travel for family members will be fully reimbursed. That hasn't happened either.

Arbitrator's orders aren't optional. Nor can they wait. Accordingly, the Union will be seeking the Arbitrator's help on an urgent basis to ensure respect for his decision. And unless common sense and cooperation prevail soon, we will be filing his decision in Federal Court next week.

In the meantime, we ask all members to keep careful records of any attempts to book free travel which are improperly declined, or receipts for paid travel which should have been free – going back to when the program changed in March. We'll advise you of all developments.

URGENT NOTE (added August 14, 2015):

As a courtesy, we advised VIA yesterday that we planned to issue the above message today. Instead of responding, VIA's President has sent a lengthy message directly to all employees, without notifying the Union in advance. Among other things, the message declares that family members' travel will be shown on T4s for the first time in VIA's history, and that anyone who has taken advantage of VIA's new policy since August 4 will have money clawed back. This is not the way to do business with workers and their unions.

We will respond in detail in the days to come.

In solidarity,

Danny Andru
Secretary Treasurer
Unifor National Council 4000

Barry Kennedy
President
Unifor National Council 4000

Ken Hiatt
President
Unifor Local 100

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