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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FARMERS DECIDE OPERATIONS OF CWB, NOT CONSERVATIVE MPS

Saskatoon, SK – The National Farmers Union (NFU) is expressing its extreme displeasure that the Conservative government is once again attempting to meddle in the operations of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). Last week, Conservative Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz criticized the CWB for the purchase of two laker ships for moving grain across the Great Lakes. Also, Conservative MP Bruce Stanton introduced a private member's bill aimed at allowing farmers to opt out of the CWB.

"The operations of the CWB are decided by farmers through the farmer-elected Board of Directors. This past fall, farmers voted for four out of five pro-single desk candidates in the CWB director elections, only 32 votes from a complete sweep. Pro-single desk candidates make up eight of the ten farmer-elected directors, a ratio that very accurately reflects the opinions of individual Western farmers. It's now up to those duly elected directors to make decisions about the day-to-day operations of the CWB, not the Harper Conservatives," stated NFU Coordinator Glenn Tait.

The Harper Conservatives have a long history of attempting to undermine the CWB's single-desk monopoly, dating back to their 2006 election pledge. Stephen Harper's personal obsession can be traced back to his days with the right-wing National Citizen's Coalition.

"This bill is just another attempt by the Harper Conservatives to step on the will of Western Canadian farmers. Back in 2008 Harper said he'd "walk over" anyone who opposed his intentions on this, and that's just exactly what he's attempting to do here," continued Tait.

"The purchase of the lakers was a sound business decision by the CWB on behalf of farmers. The ships will give Western grain farmers greater shipping control and profits from an important value-added asset in the Great Lakes," stated Tait.

"Ask any Western Canadian farmer and there's a whole lot of other issues that need to be tackled, including the \$200 million yearly overcharge by the railways and the delisting of producer car loading sites. If this government is so concerned about the real issues facing Western grain farmers, this is where they'd be devoting their time and energy," concluded Tait.

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