

Letter to the Editor  
The Globe and Mail

Dear Editor;

Your editorial demands CAW concessions as part of any deal to restructure the North American auto industry (“Keeping a foot in the car door,” November 19). “It is not only companies that need to be competitive,” you write, “but also work forces.”

Indeed, the CAW was the first major player in the North American industry to respond pro-actively to the devastating effects of the financial crisis and credit crunch. Just two months ago our new 3-year contract came into effect: freezing wages, suspending cost of living protection, and introducing savings totaling \$300 million per year (or over \$10,000 per worker per year) for Canadian automakers once fully implemented. Auto labour costs are significantly lower in Canada than in the U.S., Germany, and Japan – yet our productivity is higher (at least 10% better than in America).

We didn’t write the free trade deals, and we don’t manage the companies. We don’t design the vehicles – we just build them. The best thing we can do as auto workers is to keep building vehicles in the most efficient, high-quality plants in the hemisphere, at fully competitive costs.

Ken Lewenza  
National President, CAW