

Ottawa may table new Rail Freight Service Review legislation Tuesday

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Courtesy CN Rail Customers of the railways have argued new regulations are needed to rebalance the power in negotiations with both CN and CP.

The federal government could table new legislation stemming from the Rail Freight Service Review as early as Tuesday morning.

The legislation, entitled “An act to amend the Canada Transportation Act,” has been put on the order paper and is the culmination of a nearly five-year review of systemic complaints of poor service from customers of the country’s largest railways, Canadian National Railway Co. and Canadian Pacific Railway Ltd.

The new legislation could be tabled as early as 10 a.m. Tuesday morning.

While the details of the new legislation are not known, the federal government committed to tabling the bill amending the Canada Transportation Act this fall to give shippers the right to service agreements with the railways and a process to establish such agreements should commercial negotiations fail.

Customers of the railways have argued new regulations are needed to rebalance the power in negotiations with both CN and CP, where many are often left with few other options to move their goods.

But both railways have urged Ottawa to take a more measured approach, arguing the customer-friendly commercial measures they have implemented in the aftermath of the service review have adequately addressed the deficiencies it identified.