



# 2019 Forest Industry Bargaining

## USW LOCAL 1-1937 UPDATE

2019 BARGAINING UPDATE #11 – July 12, 2019

### Coast Bargaining Committee - News Release

#### WESTERN FOREST PRODUCTS REJECTS MEDIATION

Western Forest Products Inc. applied for mediation under Section 74 of the BC Labour Relations Code and then proceeded to make statements to the media that the Union rejected their offer. With WFP's actions and bargaining style, the Union soon recognized that WFP needs the help of a mediator to reach an agreement. USW Local 1-1937 then made an offer to accept their request for mediation on July 8<sup>th</sup>.

With the assistance of legal counsel and the LRB, it was communicated to WFP that the Union was prepared to accept their request for mediation with no preconditions, as renowned Mediator Vince Ready was prepared to make himself available this weekend to assist the parties, if they agreed to his involvement.

Vince Ready is highly respected and is a preeminent labour dispute mediator that both the BC NDP and BC Liberal governments have appointed to some of the most high profile labour disputes in recent memory, including settling disputes with the Teachers, the Construction sector and the Mining sector, just to name a few. His track record speaks for itself. He also has extensive knowledge of the Coast Forest Industry due to his decades of work in resolving disputes as an arbitrator and in his umpire role for the parties.

While the role of a mediator under Section 74 of the BC Labour Code is non-binding on the parties, it came as a complete surprise that Western Forest Products advised on July 11<sup>th</sup> that they would not agree to Mr. Ready's appointment.

USW Local 1-1937 President, Brian Butler stated, "*Western Forest Products' refusal to agree to someone as qualified as Vince Ready, is the complete opposite of Western Forest Products publicly stated position that they want mediation. It is clear by their action yesterday that they are not serious about negotiating a collective agreement with our Union.*"

While our members will be disappointed with WFP's actions, it hardens the Union's resolve in its fight for a good collective agreement; one our members deserve and one that rejects WFP's concessionary demands which come while the company reports record earnings and strong markets.

Note: WFP continues to conflate the problems with fibre shortages and mill closures in the Interior Industry (due to pine beetle infestation and wildfires) with the Coast Industry which have very different fibre supplies, markets, and product values, which along with other issues, make them very different industries.



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