



2020 Forest Industry Bargaining

USW LOCAL 1-1937 UPDATE

2020 BARGAINING UPDATE #50 – February 15, 2020

Coast Bargaining Committee – Media Release

Immediate Release:

United Steelworkers Local 1-1937 Announces Ratification Vote Results

The United Steelworkers Local 1-1937 (USW) announces that its membership has ratified its tentative agreement with Western Forest Products (WFP) by 81.9 percent.

USW members working for contractors represented by Forest Industrial Relations also ratified the agreement by 93 percent.

The Local Union is pleased that its membership has accepted the agreement its bargaining committee has recommended. *Note: The Local Union still has small number of ratifications votes to be conducted in remote areas of coastal BC which will not significantly alter the percentages noted.*

“Our membership has stood up and pushed back against a company that was bent on breaking our Local Union. They picked the wrong fight, with the wrong Local Union. Our members have negotiated a contract that achieves many of our members goals and notably did not give Western Forest Products any concessions”, **stated Brian Butler, President USW Local 1-1937.**

It was an impressive act of solidarity that focused our membership on a fight against a large prosperous corporation who attacked their pensions, job security, health & welfare benefits and many other fundamental rights our members have negotiated over decades.

While we did not achieve our goal of ending what members believe are dangerous alternate shifts, we did improve the dispute process by ensuring that companies

must make operational trials of safer shift schedules that the Union proposes, in order for our members to demonstrate that there are other shift schedules, that are not only as productive at their desired shifts, but are safer for workers as well.”

“Going forward, it will be incumbent on WFP to understand that simply ignoring the safety of our members and forcing them to work on alternate shifts that members believe will lead to serious injuries and even fatalities, cannot continue,” stated Butler.

Highlights of the agreement include:

- 12.5% increase in remaining four years and four months of a five-year agreement
- Increases to Life Insurance, AD&D, and Health and Welfare Benefits
- Increased Premiums for Shift Differential, First Aid Ticket Holders
- Safety Boot Allowance introduced
- Alternate Shifting Language Improvements
- Controls on WFP’s Drug & Alcohol Policy
- Undercut Contracting language that protects USW members working for WFP and Existing Contract Crews
- Health and Safety Language Improvements
- Union Security Language Improvements
- Zero concessions

Our Union would like to thank everyone who supported our members in their struggle for a fair collective agreement which sets the pattern for further agreements in Coastal BC.

Assistance and support from a wide range of organizations including our sister Local Unions within USW District 3 and the broader labour movement, including the BC Federation of Labour and its Affiliated Unions is outstanding. As well, the support in local communities with food deliveries, services and financial support was overwhelming. Those assisting our Local Union will not be forgotten.

Our members demonstrated that workers do not have to accept unwarranted concessions from a large prosperous company and when workers are prepared and supported by their communities, they fight back to achieve the fairness, safety and job security that their labour deserves.

Going forward, we hope that, WFP realizes working with their workforce rather than against them is their best option for good and fair labour relations.

The Local Union has no information at this time, on when members may return to work. We will be speaking with Western Forest Products representatives in the coming days regarding their operational start up plans and will pass along any information we receive in further posts.



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