



December 1, 2023

**To All Members of USW LOCAL 1-1937**

**Re: Year-End Letter and 2024 Delegated Meetings**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This past year has been challenging in many ways for the Membership, your Officers and Business Agents, the Executive Board and the Support Staff of USW, Local 1-1937.

Following on the heels of COVID, members and their families have seen inflation at levels we have not seen for many years, which has been extremely challenging for families. In the Local's primary industry, we have felt the impact of curtailed and permanently closed operations. We have also negotiated many good collective agreements and have welcomed new members from new certifications including the 420 members at the Newmont Red Chris Mine. During this time, the Union has shown its resilience and ability to change to meet any challenge.

As the year comes to an end, we want to take a moment to recognize a Support Staff member the Union has relied upon since 1973. Sister Julie Wright, who works in our Courtenay Office, started work fifty (50) years ago this past spring for IWA Local 1-363. In a remarkable and outstanding career working for the Union, Julie has greatly assisted countless members as well as Local Officers and Business Agents in too many ways to count. To this day, her extensive encyclopedic knowledge of past issues and undeniable skill in supporting the work of Officers and Business Agents and the needs of the Local Union are second to none. Not many people achieve the mark of 50 years of work, especially in one organization. On behalf of all members, retired and active, thank you for your dedicated and impeccable service to the membership.

Some members may face challenges when they work for difficult employers, for those members working in the forest industry the challenges also relate to government decisions and legislation affecting their workplace.

It has been extremely difficult witnessing the government form an old growth technical panel made up of people (4 of 5) connected to the Sierra Club, which we believe made decisions based on ideology and emotion, rather than science. The government has heard our Union make the case that bringing groups together to learn from one another and form decisions that everyone can live with, is what we need to lead us through this difficult time.

Supporting misguided eco-groups that fundraise off misinformation campaigns aimed at misleading the public on harvesting practices is not the way to find solutions. Couple that with a distinct lack of consultation with labour, industry and First Nations and the government formed one-sided old growth panel has led us to more unrest and uncertainty, further stalling the needed investment for our workplaces. These problems continue to this day but there are solutions.

We will not give up on our fight to have the Working Forest protected and managed in a way that gives current and future generations of workers the ability to work in this renewable industry in a sustainable way. We will do that by continuing to promote and protect good, safe, family supporting Union jobs in this Province. The Local Union with support from the USW Wood Council will continue to press the government to involve all stakeholders and seek a balance that protects current jobs, and enact policy and improve legislation that gives workers, industry, and First Nations the certainty we all need.

The Union will continue to support the need for government to fully involve and collectively consult First Nations, Labour, and Industry, when it is developing new forestry legislation and policies and reviewing and revising its existing legislation.

We will push the government to perform a further Labour Code review in 2024, where Steelworkers will again press the government on improving unionized workers' rights under the Labour Code, including our continuing fight for legislated successorship rights for forest workers in tenure and volume transfers in this Province. We continue to see the government stall on ensuring all workers have the right to keep their rights when their workplace ownership changes.

To be fair, the government has made some important changes that support workers. The government did listen to the labour movement in its campaign to legislate paid sick days for all workers; it has also made great strides in making the chance of affordable housing available and has updated its Labour Code to include automatic certification for workers seeking to organize. Without the later change, the extensive threats and challenges initiated by most employers serve to intimidate workers who seek to organize. Having said that, clearly, there is more to do to ensure workers' rights are advanced.

The Safety of workers regardless of whether your workplace is considered safety sensitive or not, is of the utmost importance to your Local Union. We will continue to advocate for changes at WorkSafe BC in both the area of prevention and in ensuring our members receive the treatment and compensation they deserve when injured or ill. We will continue to address safety issues at the bargaining table whenever our members renew their collective agreements.

This work and much more will continue to be a main focus of our Local Union in the years to come.

Within the Local Union, we will continue to put an emphasis on strong fiscal management of the Local Union to ensure our Local Union remains one of the strongest in the country. Even with the curtailments and closures over the last few years, the Local Union has and will face those challenges head-on. For those unaware, our Local Union is one of the five largest Local Unions within the United Steelworkers in Canada.

Our education program continues to provide the necessary training that will allow our committees to hold management to account in upholding their collective agreement rights, ensure safe workplaces and treat our members with respect.

We continue to make education a foundation for our Local Union which will be an even more important part of the Local Union this coming year. With a large amount of the membership reaching retirement age in the coming years, it is important that our younger members, especially those under five (5) years of service, are given the opportunity to learn about the Union's history, its structure and purpose in our one-day General Membership Course which will soon be out in an online form. We continue to expand our education department services and abilities and continue our plans to increase the training and on-the-job experience amongst our activists to achieve good succession planning within our Local Union.

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## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

### **Delegated Wage & Contract Conference:**

**The Local Union will be holding its pre-bargaining forest industry Delegated Wage & Contract Conference on February 22, 2024, in Nanaimo at the Nanaimo Conference Centre starting at 9:00 a.m.** During the Conference, the Local Union will set its bargaining agenda for the majority of the Coastal Forest Industry.

The Conference will include information and research presented on the state of the forest industry, followed by the delegates' review, debate and voting on resolutions put forward from operations, areas meetings and the Executive Board. Ultimately a set of resolutions for the bargaining table will be approved.

### **15<sup>th</sup> Local Annual Delegated Meeting (LADM) including Local Union elections:**

**The LADM will be held on February 23, 2024, in Nanaimo BC at the Nanaimo Conference Centre starting at 8:30 a.m.** Business at the meeting will include a detailed overview report and debate on the past year's activities in the Local Union, **Nominations and Elections of Officers and Executive Board Positions (3 year terms) as well as a Trustee position**, By-Law and Local Union Resolutions for the coming year, Guest Speakers and expanded Education Seminars conducted by legal counsel from Banister & Company and Victory Square Law Office.

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We would like to thank the many Members who work tirelessly on behalf of the Membership, especially our Plant/Camp Committees and Safety Committees. The Local Union would like to encourage more members to become active in their operations plant/camp and safety committees. For those that are new to Committees, be assured the Local Union Education Program will provide you have the training you need to best represent members in your operation.

Shop Stewards are the foundation for a strong vibrant Union. While the work can be difficult at times, there is a great deal of satisfaction in knowing that you are providing an invaluable service to help your fellow Union members. That in turn helps your Union and the Labour Movement as a whole. We thank you for your continued support.

Wishing everyone and their families a happy, safe, healthy, and prosperous 2024.

**IN SOLIDARITY,  
UNITED STEELWORKERS, LOCAL 1-1937**



**Brian Butler, President**



**Dusty Palmer, Financial Secretary**