



2019 Forest Industry Bargaining

USW LOCAL 1-1937 UPDATE

2019 BARGAINING UPDATE #10 – July 9, 2019

Coast Bargaining Committee - News Release

BC LRB REJECTS WFP “IMMINENTLY PERISHABLE” APPLICATION

Over the long weekend, WFP applied to the Labour Relations Board (LRB) for an order to extend the Unions 72-hour strike notice by 144 hours so that they could move all of their logs presently in saltwater into fresh water.

They claimed the logs were “imminently perishable” if they were left in saltwater. A day-long hearing was held at the LRB on Monday, July 1st. It was made clear by the Union that the logs were not subject to “imminently” perishing. Teredo navalis (the naval shipworm) can impact logs in saltwater but the danger of infestation is in no way imminent, as logs can last in saltwater for many, many months and still have no certainty that they will degrade as alleged by WFP.

Local Union President, Brian Butler stated:

“The Union took the position that if the LRB were to allow such a frivolous application it would give the Company an advantage, by taking away any leverage the Union had in keeping the logs behind picket lines, where the company would not be able to sell them and maintain cash flow, allowing it to withstand a strike for a longer period. The LRB Vice-Chair hearing the case dismissed WFP’s application at 3:30 pm on July 1st, allowing the strike to proceed.”

Even though WFP lost their case they continue to try to have towing companies remove booms that are declared hot and are behind picket lines. The Unions water pickets are doing all that they can to ensure picket lines are strong. The Union appreciates all of the support it has received from the Canadian Merchant Service Guild (CMSG) and International Longshore Workers Union (ILWU) and their members. Tug owners, on the other hand, are suspected of working with WFP to manipulate log booms, by changing identification to disguise them.

WFP ARGUES AT LRB FOR DESTABILIZING 50 YEARS OF ME-TOO HISTORY

For a Company that states they want to negotiate an agreement with the Union, they are spending a large amount of time litigating issues instead of negotiating with the Union.

The second LRB application by WFP this past week was to attack the very core of bargaining in the logging sector which over the last 15 years has seen a significant increase in the number of contractors that work for the major licensees.

WFP has asked the LRB to rule it illegal for the Union to have contract companies sign what has been known for 50 plus years as a Me-Too Agreement where a contractor signs an agreement with

the Union that states they will abide by the results of negotiations between the Union and the predominant Licensee which is currently Western Forest Products. Those results can be an agreement or a strike.

Local President, Brian Butler stated:

“WFP is essentially screwing with the Me-Too system which has been in place for many decades and has allowed for a level playing field for all contractors and a fair system for both parties. Their actions at the LRB stand in stark contrast to its publicly stated position that they want to reach a collective agreement.”

If WFP had their way each and every contractor (over 200) big or small would have to sit and negotiate directly with the Union which would be unworkable and destabilize the Coast Industry. If successful it would create unfair advantages for some contractors over others who bid for work and create a race to the bottom mentality for the contractor community.

WFP’s attack is poisoning labour relations with the Union and is setting the Union and Company relationship backwards by decades.

An LRB hearing on this case was held on July 4th and 5th in Vancouver. The Union is waiting on a decision from the LRB Vice-Chair in this case who clearly heard of the chaos that a decision that favours WFP would create.



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