



# **2019 Forest Industry Bargaining**

## **USW LOCAL 1-1937 UPDATE**

**2019 BARGAINING UPDATE #25 – October 21, 2019**

### **Coast Bargaining Committee - News Release**

WFP has once again squandered an opportunity to reach a Collective Agreement with the Local Union by refusing to move off its unreasonable, unwarranted and unacceptable concessions, which has stalled the mediation process again.

The Parties met last Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday (October 16, 18, 19, 20) during which time progress was made, but only on issues that had no cost implications for WFP.

The Parties started to package bargain on the remaining issues on Sunday morning with the Union proposing seven (7) reductions in our wage and benefit proposals as well as withdrawing two other monetary positions.

The Union as well removed a contentious Drug & Alcohol position and made a major move in the area of contracting out undercut volumes that WFP was not responsible for. The Union also agreed to strike sub-committees to review Local Agreements and Practices in good faith to see if amendments, cancellations or continuation of those Agreements and Practices were the right course.

WFP's response to the Unions significant movement was to table exactly the same positions they had on all issues. They did not move on one single issue.

- They have not moved off their skinny monetary and long-term duration offer since bargaining ended in June.

WFP continues to push for five (5) concessions that the Union and its membership will never agree too.

- Concessions still include gutting all Local Agreements and Practices in all of their operations. Their proposal for a draft policy on training and postings takes away your right to get training and postings by seniority and replaces it with a system of measuring employees based on their absenteeism, discipline record and other issues before seniority would be considered as a tie-breaker. It is unworkable and would undo 50 years of bargaining at the local level.
- They also continue to propose a system of contracting out all of their parent company crew logging operations by phases. This sub-division of bargaining units would be the beginning of

the end of Unionized logging. It is a divide and conquer strategy that undermines the Union by making a larger company crew into small crews, which then bid for work on a block by block basis. The Union has had so much negative experience with this type of contracting through other companies and the Woodlands Letter of Understanding, that we know we can never go down that road.

- They continue to push for taking money out of the Long-Term Disability program rendering it a program that cannot improve, essentially freezing the opportunity to extend the program to age 65 and allow for cost of living increases. Whether you are young or old this benefit is important in the Forest Industry, where years of hard work or a single accident can leave you needing this program.
- They also continue to insist on going to market with our Short-Term Disability (STD) program and Life and AD&D Insurance which we have commented before is a way to move the benefits away from a Trusteed Plan (this would negatively affect member appeals), as well as having WFP take control of the details of the plan (affecting whether members qualify for the benefit). Both of which are non-starters for the Union.
- They even made worse their position on leave of absences (LOA), by stating that any member who suffered an injury or illness off the job, who does not apply for STD, will have their leave of absence for injury or illness terminated. They had one example of one instance of a member being off work on an LOA for an illness, who had not applied for STD (as their doctor advised they could work elsewhere). They wished to terminate this employee for doing what their doctor advised. They also stated if a member was declined by STD or WorkSafeBC they would have their injury or illness leave automatically canceled. Again, something we could never agree too.

**Our members' mandate is very clear, that we do not accept any concessions in this round of bargaining, especially since there is no market evidence on the Coast and no company performance that demonstrates that cost-cutting is needed.**

**It appears WFP has not learned that no deal will be reached with their concessions on the table. It also suggests that WFP has no real interest in reaching a deal as they have publicly stated.**

**The ball is clearly in WFP's court, as they refused to make any changes to their proposal while the Local Union made significant moves. This isn't something you do in bargaining if you truly want to make progress in getting an agreement.**

**The mediators agreed there was no point in continuing with mediation at this time. We know this will frustrate our members but we cannot bargain with ourselves. The Bargaining**

## 2019 BARGAINING UPDATE #25 – October 21, 2019 *(continued)*

Committee is open to further mediation with WFP if they are prepared to make changes in their position that will move the process forward.

The Local Union will be planning a Rally at WFP's Nanaimo Office in the near future please look for a notice on this event in the coming days. We also hope to be holding some Town Hall meetings in the coming month as well.



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