



2019 Forest Industry Bargaining

USW LOCAL 1-1937 UPDATE

2019 BARGAINING UPDATE #27 – November 1, 2019

Coast Bargaining Committee - News Release

USW LOCAL 1-1937 BARGAINING COMMITTEE REFUSES TO GIVE UP RIGHTS IN BINDING ARBITRATION

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Our members who work for Western Forest Products (WFP) were sent letters from CEO Don Demens yesterday. Your Bargaining Committee also received a similar letter from WFP bargaining spokesperson Roger MacDougall. In the letters, WFP has requested that the Local Union agree to enter Binding Arbitration with Vince Ready and Amanda Rogers to allow for an imposed Collective Agreement.

First, some history.

The last time the Local Union faced Binding Arbitration over its Collective Agreement was in 2004, when the BC Liberal Government imposed Binding Arbitration that forced the Union to accept a substandard Collective Agreement which was gutted of many rights the Union had gained over decades of collective bargaining.

Then Local Unions 1-80, 1-85, 1-363 and 1-2171, which now make up Local 1-1937, were forced to accept the employers' unilateral right to implement alternate shifts, which previously had to be agreed upon between the Parties. This has created untold hardship for members forced to work on fatigue inducing, unsafe work schedules that members have suffered under ever since.

We were also forced to accept whole logging operations being contracted out through what is now known as the Woodlands Letter of Understanding, which led to the introduction of many new contractors and subcontractors, many of which created all kinds of labour relations problems for our members and the Local Union. Their rampant use became a divide and conquer strategy for the Industry.

Many other negative results came from the imposed 2004 contract that still plagues the membership to this day, as a consequence of Binding Arbitration. Repeating mistakes of the past is not the way we will reach a Collective Agreement.

2019 BARGAINING UPDATE #27 – November 1, 2019 *(continued)*

By WFP's request yesterday, they are trying to get a third party to force concessions on our members that they know they cannot achieve at the bargaining table. Binding Arbitration is completely unacceptable. We can never give up control of our Collective Agreement rights to another third party as history does not lie. We have witnessed the damage and suffered the consequences of this dangerous process and could never agree to it.

In MacDougall's letter to the Local Union and in the slightly altered Demens letter to members, they state that they are now open to movement on their positions and stay as long as it takes to reach an agreement. This is definitely good news, as it was WFP's refusal to move on a single item on Sunday, October 20th that ended the last mediation session.

The Local Union replied to WFP yesterday to advise that we will not enter Binding Arbitration under any circumstance, but we are very prepared, as we have been since July 1st, to continue to resume the current mediation process and stay as long as it takes to reach a negotiated Collective Agreement.

We have therefore asked WFP to contact the Mediators and schedule dates ASAP.

We are currently awaiting word from the Mediators that WFP has advised them they are now prepared to move and have requested a resumption of mediation.

In Solidarity,

Your Local 1-1937 Bargaining Committee



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