



2019 Forest Industry Bargaining

USW LOCAL 1-1937 UPDATE

2019 BARGAINING UPDATE #36 – December 10, 2019

Coast Bargaining Committee - News Release

WFP FINALLY REPLIES; MEDIATION TO CONTINUE

Since our last meeting with WFP and Mediators on November 28, 2019, the Union has continued to request bargaining meetings. Our Bargaining Committee was finally contacted by the Mediators on December 8th who suggested the Parties get back together on Dec 12th. We immediately agreed to the date and have received confirmation today that WFP agreed to the date as well.

We have reported in recent bargaining updates that the key issue of unsafe Alternate Shifts still remains a major stumbling block which we hope to breakthrough in the coming mediation sessions. Alternate Shifts continues to be a key issue in both Logging and Manufacturing Operations.

There are several other outstanding issues including LTD and WFP's Drug & Alcohol Policy which target workers rather than help workers with dependency issues and continues to drive safety underground. WFP has put in place a Policy that is different than other coastal forest industry companies. WFP policies terminate workers not because they are impaired but because they have violated WFP's Policy by possibly having trace amounts of a drug or alcohol in their system. Their policy is also not consistently applied which leaves a lot of room for favouritism and abuse. Simply moving their Policy back to what the rest of the coastal industry has would be a start to resolving this issue for now.

Other issues for the Union include first aid and shift premium increases, establishing a boot allowance and permanent partial closure language for phase contractors to name some.

WFP still has concessions on the table with their current positions on contracting out and on Local Agreements and Practices. As noted from the outset of bargaining, our members' mandate continues to be that concessions will not be agreed upon by the Union at any point during these negotiations.

The Local Union recognizes how hard this strike has been on communities and local businesses, but it has been hardest on our membership, who continue to fight for a fair contract against corporate greed fighting for the right to a safe workplace, safe shifts and being able to come home at night in the same shape you went to work in is fundamental to our members.

We remain hopeful that we will be able to reach an agreement with WFP. We will report on our next bargaining/mediation meetings as soon as possible.

CONTRACTORS DOING WFP'S DIRTY WORK IN CALLING FOR GOVERNMENT TO INTERVENE AND TAKE AWAY WORKERS' RIGHTS

While some individuals backed by contractor associations have been lobbying for the Government to intervene in this labour dispute, we support the Government's position to remain neutral and not give the employers what they want.

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Our members are very clear they do not want intervention and a binding process. Free collective bargaining is a fundamental workers' right. The forest industry is not an essential service and workers fighting for safer shifts and a fair contract should not have those rights stripped in any way.

In fact, it was the Liberal Governments intervention and a binding arbitration process in 2004 that led to this long strike we are currently involved in today. That 2004 binding process stripped away the previously negotiated rights the workers had to vote on Alternate Shifts and their work schedules. Had binding mediation not happened, the membership most likely wouldn't be on strike today. The members of Local 1-1937 are on strike fighting for the rights on Alternate Shifts for all Union members and a fair Collective Agreement that every member of the Local will benefit from.

Groups like the Truck Loggers Association (TLA) who advocate for an imposed agreement don't speak for workers' rights. They speak for disgruntled contractor owners.

Recently in videotaped meetings with Minister Claire Trevena and released into the media cycle, did not include striking Steelworker members. This disgruntled contractor meeting was not sanctioned by USW Local 1-1937.

These contractors' views are very much in the minority compared to the views of the USW members on the outstanding issues remaining at the bargaining table.

The TLA's planned Rally at the legislature on Wednesday, December 11th is **NOT** supported by the USW. So don't be fooled, as this Rally is a blatant attempt to undermine the Union and take up WFP's desire to have binding arbitration imposed which is completely contrary to the demands of members on strike.

They try to promote the Rally as though it is workers currently on strike who will be there. Again, this is not striking workers, it is WFP's supporters doing WFP's bidding to try and force the Government to impose binding mediation.

We were advised that this Rally is being organized by Bill Coates, the owner of Star Contracting, that has previously used SCAB Labour to perform bargaining-unit work behind picket lines. Contractors like this are the very reason your Bargaining Committee has worked diligently to negotiate language to "deal" with delinquent non-compliant companies who continuously violate the rights that Local 1-1937 members have in their Collective Agreements.



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