



2019 Forest Industry Bargaining

USW LOCAL 1-1937 UPDATE

2019 BARGAINING UPDATE #40 – December 18, 2019

Coast Bargaining Committee - News Release

MEDIATION HITS IMPASSE OVER CONCESSIONS & SHIFTING

The Parties spent the bulk of the last two days talking about two major sticking points. Alternate Shift Schedules and Contracting Out. Alternate Shift Schedules are our members' issue and Contracting Out is their issue.

It is very unfortunate to report that WFP (who had stalled in coming back to the table) showed up with their new bargaining team (Vice President Jennifer Foster and recently retired Vice President Mike Cass) and talked for two days, saying they understood the members' frustration and concerns with the alternate shifts and acknowledged that WFP was dismissive and did not listen when the Union suggested other shifts under the Supplement #8 process during the term of the last Collective Agreement.

WFP's proposal also had the last sentence which read: Management ultimately reserves the right to implement an alternate shift. This is what the current Alternate Shift language states, in that they can implement what they want at the end of the day.

Jennifer Foster herself has stated in a meeting that she "(I) would not want to work that shift" in response to discussion on the 6-day 4x10 shift with split days off.

The Union has made significant changes to its proposal on alternate shifts during the last mediation sessions, which will be discussed in detail at the membership meetings noted below.

WFP CONTINUES TO RELY ON CONTRACTORS TO DO THEIR DIRTY WORK

WFP has been pretty quiet in their media releases lately. We believe this is because of their reliance on contractor owners to do their dirty work in pressing the Government for intervention, misinforming workers, spouses, community members and anyone who will listen, about outstanding issues and their desire for members to give up their rights. This is all an effort to undermine the solidarity of the Union, via media, social media and word of mouth. It isn't working.

This is something that will only prolong the strike and will be discussed at our upcoming meetings.

CONCESSIONS STILL ON THE TABLE

Right from day one, WFP tabled targeted concessions in order to take rights away from our members. That has not changed as time has passed. There are fewer of them, but the concessions on Contracting Out and in cancelling Local Agreements and Practices remain very dangerous to the membership.

In Contracting Out, the company wants to be able to bring in additional stump-to-dump and phase contractors in all of their logging operations, which have the ability to take cut away from our parent company crews and the existing contractors. This is a proposal that all members on the logging side of the business should continue to fight against.

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The Union has been clear from the outset that we will not accept concessions. They are not warranted and the Bargaining Committee has been given clear directions from the members to ensure the company does not achieve any.

The Union will detail the damage that WFP's concessions would cause and the strategy the Union has applied to counter them in our upcoming meetings.

OUTSTANDING ISSUES

As an update, outstanding issues remain on the table for the Union that were not addressed in the past two days due to the Parties being hung up on the issues above. When WFP refused to move, it led to the issues not being discussed in detail.

Those items include: increasing shift differential beyond the 0.31 cents it's been since 1982; a first aid ticket premium increase; improvements to Health and Welfare (vision care, orthotics, hearing aids, life insurance, AD&D); a new boot allowance; improved severance pay language for contractor employees; bereavement leave to include our brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law; LTD improvements; getting WFP's Drug & Alcohol Policy back to where all other companies policies are; as well as dealing with job security and other issues tied to Local Agreements and Practices they still wish to cancel.

MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS

The Union will be holding a series of meetings in the coming days. First, the Union will meet with its elected leadership in striking operations to discuss the current state of mediated talks in which we will seek their input and direction.

Following that meeting, the Union will be holding meetings with its members in Ladysmith, Port Alberni, Campbell River, Port McNeill and Powell River. These meetings are for the Bargaining Committee to inform our members and answer questions from our elected leadership and rank and file members, in the normal Union meeting structure.

A meeting notice will be out shortly with the dates, times and venue for these member meetings.

Due to concerns over WFP using its contractors to create dissension and spread misinformation, the upcoming meetings with our members will be members only. In the past, we have allowed spouses at times to attend without a voice but due to the nature of the current climate in some areas, we will be insisting on a member-only meeting. These are not meetings for the public or contractor owners or politicians.



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