

# **USW RESPONSE TO WESTERN FORESTS PRODUCTS ANNOUNCEMENT THAT CHEMAINUS SAWMILL WILL NOT OPERATE IN 2026**

January 23, 2026

To All USW Local 1-1937 Members Working For Western Forest Products:

Western Forest Products Inc. (WFP) announced today that the Chemainus Sawmill (CSD) will remain curtailed for the balance of 2026. The Sawmill was first shut down in June of 2025. The Sawmill employs 133 USW members and is a vital part of the Chemainus community and our Local Union.

Also today, the Local Union was advised that the CEO of Western Forest Products (WFP), told a government minister that the Chemainus Sawmill would not operate in 2026 and that it was due to the ongoing strike at La-kwa sa muqw Forestry LP (LKSM). Our Union however knows the reasons CSD is not operating, and those reasons lay squarely with Western Forest Products. The Union does not make decisions to not send their own logs to CSD, nor does the Union decide not to buy logs on the open market to keep the mill operating. The Union does not decide when to layoff workers or start a mill that the company shut down.

The Union strongly believes that the CEO's comments (including those in their internal Western Update Jan 23/2026) which seek to blame the Union or Union workers for the curtailment, are an example of Western Forest Products sowing dissention between Union members. He should be focusing his time on finding solutions to the mill's fibre supply issues, which is squarely within the company's control.

To be clear, the Union's members at LKSM have the right to protect their job security, as well as advance their collective agreement rights through strike action. The Union as well hopes to find a resolve to the labour dispute at LKSM soon, but it serves no good purpose for the CEO to connect the strike as to why CSD is not operating or why WFP Saltair Sawmill Division may be curtailed for two weeks.

Our Union is genuinely concerned with WFP's continued curtailment of Chemainus Sawmill and the impact it is having on our members and their families. It is eerily similar to the closure of both the WFP Somass Division and WFP Alberni Pacific Division in Port Alberni, where WFP instituted long-term layoffs which became permanent closures. We certainly hope that pattern does not continue with WFP Chemainus Sawmill.

What is the solution? The Union has long advocated for the creation of a Jobs Protection Commissioner which was once in place in the 1990's. It was a program that had success when viable operations needed assistance in getting through challenging times rather than close. It was a program that saved jobs and communities. Today's crisis in the forest industry could use such a program and we continue to press the government for action on a similar program.

Today, without a Jobs Protection Commissioner in place, the Union would like to see the parties, (Government, WFP and USW Local 1-1937) come together, with some urgency and find a way for Chemainus Sawmill to not only survive but to thrive, and not become another permanent closure in the forest industry. The workers deserve that; the community deserves that.

In solidarity,

Brian Butler  
President  
USW Local 1-1937

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