

2023 Forest Industry Bargaining

USW LOCAL 1-417 UPDATE

Update #4 – June 16, 2023

USW and Interior Forest Labour Relations Association (IFLRA) Commence Bargaining in Kelowna

Your USW Bargaining Committee met with the IFLRA the week of June 19th in Kelowna BC. Although we exchanged bargaining proposals on May 29th, the IFLRA's proposal lacked specifics as to what exactly the employers were seeking. Unsurprisingly, the IFLRA proposals were extremely close to what CONIFER was seeking in the North.

Generally, forestry employers are seeking: a reduced rate for probationary employees, greater flexibility for alternative shifting, reduced restrictions for relief supervisors and a significant shift in benefit costs shifting from the employer to you the employee. Industry is also looking to eliminate the annual floating holiday for members. It is not uncommon for our employers to forward these types of proposals and it is early in the bargaining process. On behalf of the affected USW members, we have tabled more than 60 proposals seeking significant contract improvements.

What Happens Next

Although it has been difficult to secure dates with the employer associations over July and August, your committee has secured two bargaining sessions with CONIFER in Prince George beginning July 10 and again on August 8. It is our hope to make significant headway towards a new collective agreement that reflects the present labour market and cost of living.

Another common theme at both the IFLRA and CONIFER has been concerns regarding dwindling supply and high cost of logs in BC. Both Employer groups have informed us that log costs in BC are the highest in North America. Your committee and other USW forestry Local Unions will be meeting with BC Premium David Eby on July 6th to discuss the importance of forestry jobs in BC.

At the bargaining table for the USW representatives from: USW Local 1-2017; USW Local 1-417; USW Local 1-423; USW Local 1-405; Jeff Bromley - USW Wood Council Chair; Shawn Harris - USW District 3 . The USW Coast Locals: 1-1937 and 2009 - collective agreements expire in 2024. Both will support the BC Interior locals in pursuit of a new, improved collective agreement for our members.

We would like to thank all of our members for your continued support.

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