

2023 Forest Industry Bargaining

USW LOCAL 1-417 UPDATE

Update #6 – August 10, 2023

Conifer Bargaining Breaks Down with Employer Concessions Still on the Table

Your interior bargaining committee met with the Northern Employer's association Conifer the week of August 8th in Prince George. It soon became very obvious that the employer was not prepared to discuss wages or remove some major concessions from the table. They are adamant that provisions that we have enshrined in our Collective Agreement for decades now need to be removed. They are:

- The removal of core principles of seniority with respect to bumping and layoffs during downtime/curtailments.
- An increase in alternate shifting language with no input or vote.
- Removing the floating holiday.
- The termination of a long standing, bi-partisan safety organization that focusses on industry safety.
- Doubling the deductible for extended health benefits.
- A 50 percent increase in cost before benefits coverage from 80% coverage to 100%.
- An apprenticeship loyalty program obligating apprentices to stay or be punished financially.

There are also a number of important proposals that came from you, the membership that the employer group are failing to address.

Your committee remains focused on achieving a contract the members can be proud of and will continue the fight next week in Kelowna with the IFLRA. Local 1-2017 has also reached out to schedule dates with the West Fraser operations of 100-Mile Lumber; Williams Lake Plywood; Q-Ply and Fraser Lake Sawmill as well as Canfor independents Plateau, Polar and Chetwynd to continue bargaining.

At the bargaining table for the USW: Brian O'Rourke—1-2017; Marty Gibbons—1-417; Pat McGregor—1-423; Grant Farquhar—1-405; Jeff Bromley—Wood Council Chair; Shawn Harris—USW Evaluator. 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.

Membership support now will be critical. Stay tuned for next steps following bargaining in the South with the IFLRA.

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