

2023 Forest Industry Bargaining

USW LOCAL 1-417 UPDATE

Update #8 – September 20, 2023

Conifer Unprepared to Continue Bargaining

The USW BC Interior Bargaining Committee met with the Council on Northern Interior Employer Relations (Conifer) in Prince George for two days September 19-20. In a very frustrating session, the employers decided to declare an impasse with the USW Bargaining Committee rather than continue bargaining and respond to the moves made by the bargaining committee.

At this point Conifer is clearly not interested in getting a new collective agreement for our members in BC's North, stating that there are still too many monetary proposals on the USW agenda. Despite this, the USW Bargaining committee again told the employer that they need to withdraw their concessions on the table including removal of the Floater; not recognizing the upcoming Day for Truth and Reconciliation statutory holiday in the manner that is outlined in our collective agreement for other stats; removal of the seniority language that allows members to bump or accept a layoff until their job is reinstated during a reduction of forces.

The inclusion of another schedule in the Alternate Shifting (North) language along with the fact the employer still hasn't tabled a monetary offer accentuates the frustration of the USW Bargaining Committee. While at impasse between Conifer and the USW, earlier in the week the bargaining committee met with the Canfor independent operations (Plateau; Polar and Chetwynd; not in Conifer) and brought those talks up to a similar point. We have also reached out to West Fraser independents 100-Mile Lumber; Williams Lake Plywood; Quesnel Plywood and Fraser Lake Sawmill to schedule bargaining to do the same.

The USW Bargaining Committee is scheduled to return to Kelowna and the IFLRA Monday, September 25 to resume talks there in hopes of achieving a collective agreement. Given the situation with Conifer in the North, a strike vote and mediation are both being considered by the committee.

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