



NEW WESTMINSTER &
DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL

Chartered By The Canadian Labour Congress

July 20, 2023

TO: Mayors, City Councillors in Metro Vancouver

Dear Local Government Leaders,

We write to you today on behalf of the New Westminister & District Labour Council (NWDLC) and the Vancouver & District Labour Council (VDLC), jointly representing approximately 120,000 unionized workers across Metro Vancouver.

It has come to our attention that the Greater Vancouver Regional District Employees' Union (GVRDEU) has been working without a renewed collective agreement for the past eighteen months. The union has been earnestly engaged in collective bargaining, meeting with employer representatives a total of twenty-four times. However, little progress has been made.

While the union has brought forward reasonable proposals for amendments to the current collective agreement, they have been met by the employer with a list of serious concessions. These concessions would take money out of workers' pockets, and negatively impact work-life balance.

Proposed concessions are in particularly poor taste at a time when the cost of living has increased steeply, and we remain in the grips of an affordability crisis. Furthermore, we understand that Metro Vancouver has struggled to hire and retain personnel, a problem which will only be exacerbated if compensation and working conditions are eroded.

We know that the old thinking of cuts and austerity will only sink our region into a deeper affordability crisis. We need to support our communities, and that starts with fair wages and working conditions for the working people that are at the heart of those communities. We also know that workers' wages tend to be spent in the local economy, thereby providing an ongoing and cyclical benefit.

As a result of continued lack of progress towards a fair contract, the union has begun taking steps in preparation for potential job action. It goes without saying that a strike would result in significant disruption to Metro Vancouver operations. However, if GVRDEU find they have to take job action in order to make progress toward a fair collective agreement, our labour councils will certainly support them in doing so.

We ask you as elected representatives to support a fair deal for GVRDEU members and respect for working families in the Metro Vancouver region. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours truly,

Janet Andrews, Secretary-Treasurer

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