

**DRAFT RECORD OF MEETING
B.C. REGIONAL COUNCIL TELECONFERENCE
HELD THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2013**

In Attendance:

Bob Jackson, REVP-B.C. (Chair)
Jennifer Chieh Ho, West Fraser Valley
Paul Croes, Pride
Benilde Gomes, Northwestern B.C.
Linda Harding, Health & Safety
Nic Humphreys, National Officers
Jayne Johns, Alt REVP-B.C.
Terri Lee, Metro Vancouver

Cindy Little, South Vancouver Island
Kelly Megyesi, Women's
Antony Paller, East Fraser Valley
Tracy Shudo, Members with Disabilities
Virginia Vaillancourt, South Vancouver Island
Christine Walker, North Vancouver Island
Susan Yaciw, Southern Interior
Erica Yang, Youth

Absent:

Shawna Bundac, Metro Vancouver
Sargy Chima, Racially Visible
Roberta Drinkwater, Southern Interior
Heather DuDoward, Aboriginal

Jamey Mills, Metro Vancouver
Sharon Tieman, Directly Chartered Locals and
Separate Employer Unit

Staff:

Patrick Bragg, Political Communications Officer
Luc Guevremont, Regional Coordinator
Kristin Schnider, EA to the REVP-B.C.

The teleconference commenced at 6:06 PM.

Bob opened the call by speaking to Bill C-4 and the impact it will have on federal government workers in the next round of bargaining. He noted that the proposed legislation contains probably the most radical changes we've ever seen as public service workers. The likelihood of the bill passing is strong. It's not a private member's bill with soft support; it comes from Tony Clement and Stephen Harper. Quite simply, it's a union busting bill that also allows for a number of drastic changes to health & safety rights, and sick leave.

With regard to health & safety rights, the Bill also includes a number of changes to existing provisions. Specifically, it will change the definition of danger to only "imminent" risks. Long term risks would no longer be included. The powers of health & safety officers will be dramatically changed as well.

With the proposed legislation, we can expect the government to go after sick leave aggressively in the next round of bargaining. However, Robyn has already been clear on our position on sick leave: we are prepared to draw line in sand on this issue. This is the fight that we'll have to take on.

In terms of collective bargaining rights, the Bill will force bargaining into conciliation: arbitration will no longer be available as a means of settlement. For other cases that *are* referred to arbitration, the proposed legislation will impose heavy scrutiny on the arbitrator by the government-appointed chair.

Given the current timeline for the Bill, it's expected that the Bill will be through the House by Christmas. Currently it's on an expedited schedule. As a result, the proposed legislation will have a significant impact on the next round of bargaining.

Bob then went on to explain next steps and what the membership can do in light of this Bill. He noted that there are a number of actions that will be taken in the next couple of weeks across the country. Bob then spoke to the leaflet that was prepared by the PSAC and distributed by Regional Offices for all locals to pass out to members via plant gates. Bob emphasized that this leaflet need to get to members ASAP, if has not already been done.

Luc added that the leaflet was emailed to locals earlier this week by the reps for them to distribute to members. Included with that leaflet was a query as to whether or not locals would like assistance printing them for plantgating, etc. Going forward we anticipate future flyers, which will follow a similar process. Bob then urged Regional Council members to be in touch with Components and to work with them to ensure members have the leaflets and information on the Bill.

Bob went on to say that we also need to have MPs engaged as well in the discussion, including Conservative MPs. Members are being asked to approach their MPs and ask whether or not the MP is supportive of the Bill. And if so, why. Bob noted that there was far from unanimous support at the Conservative Party convention with regard to their resolutions. The PSAC needs to take this opportunity to exploit division in party particularly on Bill C-4. If an MP is favourable to us – or “labour friendly,” we need to make sure that MP is speaking on our behalf. Bob then asked any Regional Council members with close ties with MPs to approach them on this issue. We need to use any and all power we have with MPs.

Bob noted that there will be opportunities at the upcoming National Equity Conferences to connect with 500-600 members, which will include a good mix of activists and those less involved. This engagement will provide the Union with a good base of members who will have knowledge on some of the proposed legislation that takes aim at unions (Bills C4 C525 C377).

Currently, Patrick is also actively pursuing an online email for members to send to MPs. In addition, a Telephone Town Hall (TTH) is being organized for the B.C. Region next Thursday night, which will reach out to all 18,000 PSAC B.C. members. As such, the previously scheduled Regional Council teleconference will be postponed. We have invited NDP MP Peter Julian and Robyn to speak on the TTH and provide them with an opportunity to discuss the Bill and why it’s important to be involved in the fight against it.

There are also activities planned for the other Regions: the Prairie Region is holding a TTH tonight and the Ontario Regions is holding an Area Council summit later this month. The B.C. Region will also be asking Area Councils to hold emergency meetings to discuss how they will play a role in reaching out to members and MPs. Bob noted that the activities are being held with a consistent approach across all Regions.

Yesterday there was a Special NBoD meeting, which included an in depth discussion of the bill. He added that there were good numbers at the rally during the Conservative Party convention in Calgary from all Components. That event is an example of noise we need to make on this issue and the struggle ahead of us.

QUESTIONS FROM THE REGIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Tracy Shudo asked what can really be done by members to prevent the Bill from passing given the Conservative majority government.

Bob answered that members need to apply pressure on the Conservative Party through MPs. There is already considerable pressure on them with the Senate scandal. If we can directly ask Conservative MPs about their stance on the Bill, we can assert our position. Moreover, if they are supportive of the Bill we can advise them that their on notice and will not be receiving voter support from PSAC members in the next election. Bob added that Bill C-4 doesn’t just affect public service workers; it also includes pension reform which will impact all Canadians. Bob then suggested that another way members can fight the proposed legislation is to reach out to pensioners and explain the impact of the bill on their rights.

The TTH will take place next Thursday, Nov. 14 at 7 PM. Members will receive a phone call to participate. TTHs are most effective when there is interaction by the participants. As such, Patrick suggested that the Regional Council members initiate the discussion by asking questions.

Patrick then provided a brief explanation of the process used by Stratcom to phone members within the Region. He added that Regional Council members can provide him with a number they’d like to be reached at on Thursday evening.

Locals have already been emailed about the upcoming TTH. The aim is to advise as many members in advance as possible to ensure maximum participation. Bob added that as the Regional Council we need to take on the responsibility of getting the message out to constituents.

Christine Walker asked how the PSAC is being supported by the CLC on this issue. Bob answered that the CLC's Fairness works campaign aligns with the PSAC's WAAA campaign. In addition, Bob attended a BCFED executive council meeting earlier today where the latest news on Bill C-4 was conveyed to the affiliates. They are well versed on the potential impact of the bill on labour and on Canadians more generally. Bob added that there was participation from the a few Federations of Labour at the Calgary rally, including the BCFED and Saskatchewan.

Jayne Johns noted that the CLC has already posted info on C-4 on their website with draft letter to use for writing MPs on bill. Bob emphasised that the PSAC will not be alone in this fight. As such, Area Councils and the Regional Council need to be plugged in to the DLCs for dissemination of information.

In closing, Bob asked that Regional Council members be prepared to ask a few questions during the TTH to get dialogue going. Patrick will be providing the Regional Council with a list of sample questions. Bob added that Regional Council members should gather as much info as they can on the proposed bill. There are already a number of resources posted on the PSAC Regional website. Other members should be pointed to this information as well.

The teleconference concluded at 6:46 PM.