



UNITED STEELWORKERS (USW)

Steelworkers Approve Strike Mandate in Southern Interior Forest Industry

BURNABY, BC, March 28 /CNW/ - Members of United Steelworkers (USW) Locals 1-405, 1-417 and 1-425 have voted 95 per cent in favour of strike action, if necessary, to back up demands in collective bargaining with member companies of the Interior Forest Labour Relations Association (IFLRA).

Balloting was conducted in the Thompson-Nicola, Okanagan and Kootenay regions last week.

USW Wood Council chair Bob Matters says the union and the IFLRA will be meeting on March 30 in Kelowna.

"With our strike mandate, our membership has put the IFLRA on notice that enough is enough and that time is running out for an agreement to be reached," says Matters. "Our bargaining committee intends to bring all of our outstanding issues to the table with the IFLRA in order to reach a timely resolve."

The USW-IFLRA collective agreement expired on July 1, 2009. Since that time the union and association have met 15 times.

"Our members have been more than patient with a collective bargaining process that has been pushed beyond reasonable limits by the IFLRA," says Matters.

Meanwhile collective agreements have already been reached with northern interior forest companies including Canfor, West Fraser and Council on Northern Interior Forest Employment Relations (CONIFER).

IFLRA member companies Tolko and West Fraser have reached agreements with

USW Local 1-424 and 1-425 in the northern Interior.



"The IFLRA wants our members to accept a sub-standard agreement," says Matters. "We intend to bargain a fair and progressive collective agreement that has parity with USW members in the northern interior."

The Steelworkers is Canada's largest industrial union with over 250,000 members in all sectors of the economy.

For further information:

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