

BC INTERIOR

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STEELWORKERS REACH TENTATIVE DEAL FOR UNION MEMBERS IN SOUTHERN INTERIOR

After nearly ten months of on-again off-again negotiations, the United Steelworkers have finally reached a tentative agreement with the Interior Forest Labour Relations Association after an all night bargaining session in Vancouver.

While the tentative deal was mediated with the help of Labour Relations Board Mediator Mark Atkinson, the USW was able to maintain their goal of bringing the union pattern agreement—already adopted by Steelworkers in the northern interior—to their union members in southern BC. Steelworkers in the south recently voted 95% in favour of strike action which showed the IFLRA that they were not willing to stand for an inferior second-rate agreement.

Details of the tentative agreement will not be released until the Steelworker members get a look at the deal. A quick overview however, reveals the pattern 4-year agreement adopted elsewhere in the industry, enhanced job security language that finally addresses the exclusion of working foreman from bargaining unit work, improved contract language surrounding permanent and/or partial closure of manufacturing operations, and a long-overdue trades rate adjustment for Tradesmen and Power Engineers that reflects the needs of both the Union and Industry.

In addition to 2% wage increases in the 3rd and 4th years, the tentative deal also has language that finally allows union members to determine the value of proposed alternate shifting that meet the needs of both the employee and the company.

The BC Interior Bargaining Committee is satisfied the deal meets the union pattern established in the north, and is recommending the membership ratify this tentative agreement.

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