



BC FERRY & MARINE WORKERS' UNION

APRIL 6, 2020 SPECIAL BULLETIN #16 LAYOFFS AND OUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

Brothers, Sisters, Friends,

I have provided some of my thoughts below, but first and foremost, if you have been laid off or are otherwise underemployed, please apply for Government Financial Supports immediately. The BCFMWU has developed a website to support you in assessing what supports you may be entitled to and guidance on how to apply: <https://www.bcfmwu.com/covid-19/financial-supports-benefits/>.

If you have any specific questions or inquiries about your personal circumstances, please email C19info@bcfmwu.com. Our people are working tirelessly to answer your questions.

We are now all aware that BC Ferries has chosen to cast our rights under the Collective Agreement aside to lay-off their "most valuable assets" as they see fit. They have done so despite the BCFMWU engaging in good faith negotiations to provide something better for our members, and with a 75% wage subsidy available from the Federal Government.

What has unfolded over the last few days has been perhaps the most difficult experience of my life. I cannot begin to imagine the stress for those of you directly affected. Meanwhile, BC Ferries CEO, Mark Collins has said in the press that he views the decision to lay off 1400 members as, "an opportunity to rest our crew and protect our crew."

From what I have heard, BC Ferries has laid off next to no management personnel, if any. Instead, they are laying off our members without regard to seniority, and without notice. I have heard stories that have brought me to tears: 20+ year employees laid off at work, and in the same breath given 48 hours to make life changing financial decisions for themselves and their families, with no alternatives. As we understand them, those options are to spend your own money from your banks, or simply seek financial assistance from the government.

I have never been so angry or upset, and I deeply admire our members' strength and composure through all of this. You all stand as heroes to me.

Our Union will not rest until this injustice has been corrected, and BC Ferries pays for the indignity it has brought on our members. We are using every measure available to us under law to seek redress.

Meantime, please stay in touch with your affected Union family, and write your MPs and MLAs to let them know how you're feeling. For our part, we will do our best to keep you informed with Town Halls, Webinars, and written updates. Stay tuned for information on how you can help make BC Ferries accountable, and seek justice for our brothers, sisters, and friends who have been laid off in violation of our Collective Agreement.

Stay strong, healthy, and solid,

In Solidarity,
Graeme Johnston
Provincial President

"Shop Stewards: Please Post on Bulletin Boards"