



September 11th, 2017

Hon. Al Hawkins
Minister of Advanced Education,
Skills & Labour
Government of Newfoundland Labrador
P.O. Box 8700
3rd Floor, West Block
Confederation Building
St. John's, NL
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Dear Minister Hawkins,

On behalf of the 65,000 members, and Executive Council, of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour (NLFL), I would like to congratulate you on your recent appointment as Labour Minister. Our organization represents members and their families, in every single community in Newfoundland & Labrador (NL), and in every sector of the NL economy.

As well, the NLFL advocates for all workers on issues such as fair and improved labour legislation, strong and enforceable OH&S and workers' compensation laws, better labour laws, strong public services, and public policy and laws that support our principles of equality, equity, social and economic justice.

Workers at D-J Composites in Gander, members of Unifor Local 597 and an affiliated member of our Federation, have been locked out by their American-based employer since December 19th, 2016.

I understand that you have been made aware of the fact, that from the beginning of this labour dispute, the company has used a variety of tactics to prolong this lockout. They have violated our Province's labour laws. They have been using tactics which, in our opinion, are nothing short of union-busting.

In this country, workers have been protected by law since the 1930's; with the right to organize, join a union of their choice, and enter into a collective bargaining process, which is also outlined and protected by law.

Employers and unions are bound by the labour laws of this province, to bargain in good faith. This company has already been found not to be doing that. Yet to date, D-J Composites has still not signaled their intent to seriously settle this agreement, and get its workers back on the job doing what they do best. Instead, they are trying to negotiate directly with members – bypassing the democratic union.



-2-

The company has been hiring throughout the lockout. It has brought in workers from its Kansas plant, and is now advertising for replacement workers to do the work of the locked out workers. This is shameful!

It is unacceptable behavior from an employer. I am asking you, as the Minister of Labour, to do the right thing and intervene on behalf of your constituents – who have done nothing but adhere to their rights as union members, and trusted the system to work for them in order to be treated fairly at their workplace.

Their struggle for justice has gone on far too long now Minister. It is time, I believe, for our government to send a clear message to this employer. That they have an obligation to bargain in good faith, and by not doing so – they have hurt not only these members and their families, but the economy of Gander, and indeed the Province.

Someone needs to stand up for our residents, and tell employers like D-J Composites that their behavior will not be tolerated in this Province. I believe your intervention will help turn things around Minister. The NLFL will be here to support you in any way we can.

Thank You,

Mary Shortall
President, Newfoundland & Labrador Federation of Labour

CC. Premier Dwight Ball
Lana Payne, Atlantic Regional Director – Unifor
Carolyn Wrice, President - Unifor Local 597
Rezaul Chowdhury, President D-J Composites Engineering
Scott Simms, MP for Coast of Bays – Central – Notre Dame
Claude Elliot, Mayor of Gander
NLFL Executive Council

jr/MS
Unifor 597