



Atlantic Regional Director's **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Halifax, April 3-6, 2014

1. **Recommendation on Unifor Atlantic Bylaws**

I recommend that we adopt the proposed Atlantic Regional Council Bylaws and refer to the Atlantic Regional Council Executive the matter of possible additional delegate representation as per Article 10 Paragraph 8 for a report at the next Atlantic Council meeting.

2. **Recommendations on Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Aboriginal Women and Girls**

I recommend that all Atlantic Regional Locals call, write, lobby and petition the Federal Government in support of the Native Women's Association of Canada's demand for national public inquiry and a national action plan to address the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls in Canada. I recommend that the Atlantic Regional Council support the Loretta Saunders Scholarship Fund with a \$2,500 contribution and I further encourage locals to show their support in any ways or means that they can.

3. **Recommendation on Save our Rails**

Canada is at a crossroad when it comes to passenger rail. A choice will have to be made whether to let a once-vibrant public utility continue its decline and eventually perish or revitalize the network through new investment that improves service, wins back customers, generates spin off-benefits economically and environmentally and efficiently links people and communities. Our union represents thousands of members in the sector right here in Atlantic Canada.

I recommend that the Unifor Atlantic Council actively support the Passenger Rail Campaign.

I further recommend that all Atlantic locals contact their Municipal Councillors and ask them to support, and take forward for adoption, a municipal motion on Passenger Rail. The motion calls on all levels of government to push the Federal Government to invest in passenger rail in Canada and specifically to keep service running between Bathurst and Miramichi, NB, the more than 70kms of track that CN will abandon in July of 2014. It further calls on them to lobby for 'National Transportation Strategy'.

I further recommend that this Council and all Atlantic locals get active in the Rail Postcard Campaign by taking the postcard for signatures to our members and community.

4. **Recommendation on Unifor's Rights at Work Campaign**

I recommend that Unifor Atlantic Local Unions carry out the Rights at Work Campaign workplace canvass by:

- a. Responding quickly to organize the workplace canvass by appointing of Local Union Canvas Coordinators, forwarding membership lists, mapping workplaces and assigning canvassers to speak with members.
- b. Securing a commitment from National Executive Board members, Local Union Executive Board members, stewards and activists for their personal involvement and leadership by example to carry out this priority campaign.
- c. Setting a goal of reaching the vast majority and hopefully all of our members.
- d. Ensuring progress reports, check up, and problem solving during the campaign.
- e. Using the Rights at Work Campaign to not only raise awareness of the threat to the trade union movement, but also to re-engage the rank and file and transform our ability to communicate with our membership on an ongoing basis.

5. **Recommendation on CPP**

The CPP covers 90 per cent of Canadians with jobs. It follows you from job to job across provinces and territories. It keeps up with the cost of inflation (indexed). It is the safest and most secure retirement vehicle. It is a defined benefit so everyone knows what they will receive when they retire. No guesswork. No stock market gamble. Expanding CPP is about preparing for the future and leaving a better retirement system for our kids. Atlantic Unifor locals can be part of making a difference.

I recommend that we continue to support the CLC's campaign to expand the CPP. Recently we called upon the Premiers of NS, NB and NL to join with PEI, Ontario and Manitoba to push for an enhanced CPP in order to ensure retirement security for all Atlantic Canadians. I recommend that Atlantic Unifor locals write their Premiers and Finance Ministers to express their support for an expanded CPP thus calling on them to stand up for retirement security for all. For more information, check out:
www.canadianlabour.ca/action-center/retirement-security-for-everyone

6. **Recommendation on Occupational Health and Safety**

I recommend that the Atlantic Unifor Region be a voice of workers' safety and health by advocating for stronger health and safety laws, practices and education whether it is the offshore of Newfoundland and Labrador, the shipyard, mill, hospital or nursing home shop floor or on our rails, oceans and roads.

7. **Recommendation on the Unifor Good Jobs Summit**

I recommend that Atlantic Regional Council of Unifor support the Good Jobs Summit and organize around the summit themes in Atlantic Canada by:

- a. Identifying partners and issues in our communities, industries and workplaces where we can high light a Good Jobs issue and take actions such as making a report on the issue, recommending a solution, and lobbying or organizing around these issues.
- b. Giving active support to the Canadian Federation of Students around their initiatives on student debt, accessible education, student jobs and unpaid internships.
- c. Linking Good Jobs activities to potential Unifor Community Chapters in Atlantic Canada.
- d. Organizing Good Jobs Summit forums in Atlantic Canada to ensure that Atlantic regional issues and solutions are part of the National Good Jobs Agenda and Action Plan.

- e. Participating in the National Good Jobs Summit by sending participant representatives from our activities and organizing efforts in Atlantic Canada.

8. **Recommendation on a Canadian Energy Strategy**

I recommend that Unifor Atlantic Council express its support for the concept of a national energy and environmental strategy for Canada, including the following principles:

- a. Binding and ambitious targets to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions;
- b. Future expansion of bitumen production needs to be managed in line with those greenhouse gas caps;
- c. Systematic efforts to ensure more Canadian content and Canadian value-added at all stages of the energy supply chain, including machinery, services, extraction, upgrading, processing, and manufacturing;
- d. Prohibitions on the export of raw bitumen, and requirements for upgrading and processing of petroleum in Canada;
- e. Efforts to match Canadian energy production with Canadian needs, and reduce imports of oil;
- f. Completion of a Canada-wide energy grid (including pipelines and electricity transmission) to improve Canadian energy security and independence;
- g. An ambitious green energy investment plan, including investment in alternative and renewable energy sources, energy conservation, and urban transit;
- h. Support for the National Executive Board's call for a national moratorium on unconventional fracking until safety, environmental, and First Nations concerns are addressed.
- i. Participate fully with Unifor's other bodies (including our new Energy Council) to develop this national energy and environmental strategy, and present it to the meeting of Premiers next year.

9. **Recommendation on the New Brunswick Provincial Election**

I recommend that Unifor will work to ensure that labour rights and a progressive agenda are advanced in the New Brunswick election campaign this summer including:

- a NB industrial policy for value-added jobs
- a no-cuts health care and education policy – P3s, Privatization
- moratorium on new exploration and hydraulic fracking
- labour law reform to enhance collective bargaining

Unifor will consult with our local unions, the trade union movement and community allies to encourage progressive, pro-labour candidates to seek nominations.

Unifor Atlantic Executive will make recommendations on the NB election when the election is called.

10. **Recommendation on Health Care**

There has been no more serious threat to Canada's Medicare than the Harper Conservatives abandoning negotiations to renew the 2004 Health Accord which expired on March 31, 2014. Rather than enter negotiations to renew the Accord, the Harper Government has unilaterally cut funding to the provinces by \$36 billion over 10 years beginning in 2017. In Atlantic Canada, the CHT reductions will hit all provinces but especially hardest hit is Newfoundland and Labrador as federal funding falls from 20.4% of provincial health spending in 2010 to only 13.8% by 2036.

These cuts have allowed provinces to cut vital health services and restructure health delivery, as in Nova Scotia which is restructuring the Regional Health Authorities and reducing services in our communities. These cuts also inevitably result in attacks on the rights and living standards of health care workers - with workers deemed essential but denied both their right to strike and fair collective bargaining.

I recommend that we join with our allies, including health care coalitions and unions, to play a leading role in defending Canada's health care system from the Harper government's neglect. I recommend we launch a campaign to defend the labour rights of Unifor Nova Scotia health care members who deliver these much needed services - including their right to fair and free collective bargaining, their right to strike and their right to remain proud Unifor members.

11. **Recommendation on Organizing**

I recommend that with the National Organizing Department, we - the Atlantic Unifor local unions, NEB members, and regional staff representatives - work together to develop a strategic organizing plan for the Atlantic region that builds upon our strengths and fulfills the goals developed at our founding convention. Those goals included building an organizing culture, engaging our locals who are our biggest organizing asset and broadening union citizenship through our Community Chapters model.

I recommend that local unions support unorganized and precarious workers by identifying groups of workers who could form community chapters and work to include them in the membership of our union.

12. **Recommendation on the CCPA**

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) is a crucial source of information/analysis and research on issues important to working people and a more progressive Canada. Strong research is critical to how we build the case for a fairer more equal country.

I recommend that Unifor's Atlantic Regional Council contribute \$2,500 annually to CCPANS, matching the National Union's contribution and thus ensuring support for research on public policy issues of importance in Atlantic Canada.

*Lana Payne
Atlantic Regional Director
April 2014*