



VANCOUVER and DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL



April 14, 2020

Mr. Mark Collins
President and CEO, BC Ferry Services Inc.

VIA Email: mark.collins@bcferries.com

Dear Mr. Collins,

Subject: Recent Layoffs at BC Ferries

I am writing today on behalf of the Vancouver and District Labour Council, representing approximately 60,000 unionized workers in the City of Vancouver and neighbouring municipalities.

We have been following the recent layoffs of BC Ferries workers. These layoffs occurred despite the option of utilizing the program offered by the Federal Government in order to keep people on the job. Worse, they were carried out without regard for the exclusive bargaining rights held by the BC Ferry and Marine Workers Union (BCFMWU), or the collective agreement they have in place with BC Ferries. We heard stories of workers learning of their layoffs via news broadcasts or social media. I myself participated in a conference call wherein a member of BCFMWU who was reduced to tears while recounting the story of how they were blindsided by the discovery of their layoff. It is shameful that BC Ferries would not at least display enough respect as to deliver such devastating news in an appropriate manner.

We understand that since that time, layoffs have been rescinded. However, this too was done without the proper involvement and agreement of the union. Furthermore, the harm done by this roller coaster approach to managing staffing levels cannot be so easily reversed. There could not be a worse time to put your employees through such an ordeal that right now, when they are already facing a great deal of stress and trepidation in relation to the risks to the health and the economic wellbeing of themselves and their families.

All of this could have been avoided by simply respecting the Collective Agreement in place between BC Ferries and BCFMWU and engaging, in good faith, in discussions with the union about how to address the circumstances at hand. BC Ferries cannot simply pretend the Collective Agreement, a legally binding contract, does not exist.

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To: Mr. Mark Collins
Re: Recent Layoffs at BC Ferries

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We are proud to count BCFMWU amongst our affiliated unions. BC Ferries forms a crucial part of the transportation system of this province, keeping the mainland and island communities connected. It is ferry workers, not executives, whose daily work makes this important service available for British Columbians. It's time that this is acknowledged, and these critical workers are given the respect they deserve.

Regards,



Stephen von Sychowski
President, Vancouver and District Labour Council

cc: VDLC Executive Board
Graeme Johnston, President, BC Ferry and Marine Workers' Union
graamejohnston@bcfmwu.com

SVS/eb

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