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# uniFORUM



## Buckley new OFL president

Longtime labour activist and Unifor National Representative Chris Buckley is the new president of the Ontario Federation of Labour.

"There is no greater honour than to serve as president of your Ontario Federation of Labour," Buckley said after accepting the new position on November 24.

Buckley replaces outgoing OFL president Sid Ryan, who Buckley honoured in his acceptance speech for his commitment to improving the lives of the province's working people and their families.

Also elected were Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation and Ahmad Gaiied from United Food and Commercial Workers. Both ran on a slate with Buckley and were endorsed by Unifor.

Unifor Staff Representative Chris Buckley, past president of Local 222, has been chosen as the new president of the Ontario Federation of Labour.

## Quebec Council meets

Close to 400 delegates and guests gathered in Quebec City for Unifor Quebec's fourth Quebec Council, held from November 27 to 29.

The delegation heard reports from union leaders such as Renaud Gagné and Jerry Dias, respectively Quebec Director and National President of

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## Unifor welcomes reopening of Coast Guard stations

Unifor, which had been a leading critic of the former Harper Government's decision to close several Coast Guard stations, welcomes news that the new federal government will reopen stations in British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

"This is the first of the commitments the Liberals made to the FFAW during

the election period to be acted upon," said FFAW-Unifor President Keith Sullivan.

This decision is based on Fisheries and Oceans Minister Hunter Tooto's mandate to "protect our three oceans, coasts, waterways and fisheries and ensure that they remain healthy for future generations." With that, the

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## In Brief

### Freelancers start petition

Freelance workers, as independent contractors and as a group of workers in precarious conditions, face great challenges when it comes to legal protection, recognition, compensation and rights over their work.

The Ontario government is currently undergoing a review of Employment Standards and Ontario Labour Relations Act through the Changing Workplaces Commission.

The CFU is calling on the Ontario government to implement all 43 recommendations submitted by Unifor, to improve minimum standards for independent contractors and freelance workers and has begun an online petition at [canadianfreelanceunion.ca/petition](http://canadianfreelanceunion.ca/petition).



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## Climate panel achieves right balance

Alberta's climate change panel tabled its report November 22 with recommendations that, once implemented, will make a significant difference in Alberta's greenhouse gas emissions and provide real solutions for affected industries and communities.

"Premier Rachel Notley has a balanced blueprint for action," said Jerry Dias, Unifor's National President. "Our children and our grandchildren need a fair economy and a livable planet. This plan ensures that Alberta can have both."

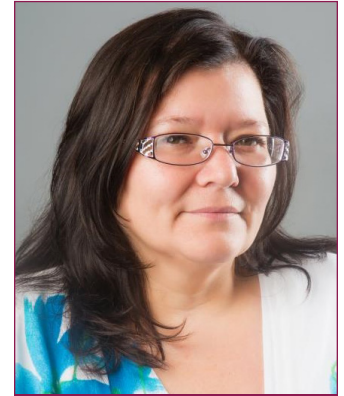
The report delivers a thoughtful review of the employment implications of climate action. The panel describes job growth areas—such as transit and renewable

energy—and for sectors with negative growth, it recommends using carbon-pricing revenue for training and transition programs.

"Training and transitions for workers will be critical to the success of Alberta's climate action plan," said Joie Warnock, Unifor's Western Director.

Angela Adams, Unifor's Education Director and Local 707A member, was appointed to the panel. Adams says protecting jobs and funding transition programs is a priority.

"The climate plan represents a great balance between being ambitious about targets and being responsible to those who could be affected in the short term," said Adams.



Angela Adams.

Immediate actions include a phase out of coal burning and transition to renewable energy and natural gas generation by 2030, carbon-pricing in 2017, and limits on oil sands emission

Alberta Environment Minister, and Unifor member, Shannon Phillips said she is ready to implement the plan.

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Unifor, as well as from Daniel Boyer, president of the QFL.

All three leaders applauded the defeat of the Conservatives, while pledging to hold the new Liberal government to its promises.

Gagné, presented a comprehensive report on Unifor's activities over the previous months, reminding attendees that "in these times of austerity and attacks on the fundamental principles of unionism and the right to free collective bargaining, we need to mobilize our members in solidarity with our public-sector counterparts in order to push back against the assault led by Philippe Couillard's Liberal government."



Members of Local 1209 in a dispute with Delastek since April 1, received a warm welcome at Quebec Council, were a fundraiser raised thousands of dollars for their families.

He congratulated all the Unifor activists who have taken part in the mobilization activities organized in recent weeks.

During the Council, Jean Simoneau, a member of the executive of Local 184, was elected to the position of secretary-treasurer of the Quebec Council. Lucie Pratt, a member of Local 522, was elected chair of the Francization Committee,

while Claude Lahaie of Local 98 and Richard Labossière of Local 2889 were elected members of this committee.

More 30 members of Local 1209, who have been embroiled in a dispute with their employer Delastek since April 1st, were treated to a warm welcome by the delegation.

A fundraiser for the workers' families raised several thousand dollars.

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president" on page 1

Before joining Unifor staff, Buckley was the president of Local 222 in Oshawa, and chair of the GM Master Bargaining Committee, where he led negotiations with General Motors for four rounds of talks. He was also a member of the committee that oversaw the formation of Unifor and played a pivotal role in the transition to the new union.

Buckley pledged to work with affiliates, activists, labour councils and equity seeking groups to build a strong OFL and a stronger labour movement in Ontario.

"There is a job to be done, on the part of Ontario workers and their families," Buckley said.

Buckley pledged to address the major issues facing labour today, including the gender wage gap, issues around precarious work, the changing jobs market, youth unemployment, and to be a strong voice in the Ontario government's ongoing review of labour laws in the province.

"We know the business groups will be pushing back, and Queen's Park will feel the pressure," Buckley said. "We need to make sure that labour pushes back even harder."

In addressing the OFL convention, both Coates and Gaied joined Buckley in committing to addressing precarious work and standing up for working people.

"Let's focus on what's



The new executive of the Ontario Federation of Labour is Executive Vice-President Ahmad Gaied from UFCW, Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates from OSSTF and President Chris Buckley from Unifor.

important to all workers, union and non-union," said Gaied, a grocery store worker. "Together we are stronger."

Coates, an educational assistant and president of the Barrie and District Labour Council, drew on

her experience negotiating with the province and representing all workers through her labour council to call for a united house of labour.

"As a united labour movement, we can make a difference," she said.

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government committed to reopening stations at St. John's and Kitsilano.

Critics warned that closing the station would cost lives.

The new Liberal government of Justin Trudeau has also pledged to ban oil tanker traffic on B.C.'s north coast. Both moves are significant in the West, where environmental and safety advocates have decried the former Conservative government's handling of marine issues.

Formalizing a 2010 tanker moratorium would put the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound off limits to tanker traffic as part of the government's goal to protect ecologically

sensitive areas. The moratorium is also expected to effectively kill any pipeline project through the area, including the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline.

The Kitsilano station typically responds to the majority of marine distress calls in the region — about 300 calls per year, one-third of the calls relate to a life-and-death situation, with most emergencies in the winter months.

On the East Coast, addition commitments of the new government include giving adjacency in fisheries management high priority, reviewing the Last-In-First-Out (LIFO) policy, committing that the first 115,000mt of northern cod be allocated to the inshore sector, and honouring the \$280-million fisheries fund as part of CETA.

## Manitoba moves welcomed on childcare and jobs

The Manitoba government's recent throne speech commitment to childcare spaces and good jobs is welcomed news for working Manitobans, Unifor says.

"Manitoba's NDP government has a good record of job creation and strengthening social programs," said Joie Warnock, Unifor's Western Director. "Today's Throne Speech reflects the values and priorities of Manitobans."

Highlights of the speech, which sets the direction for the next sitting of the Manitoba Legislature, include a \$10-billion plan for strategic infrastructure projects, 12,000 new child

care spaces, and a renewed commitment to a public inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

The Greg Selinger NDP government has also signaled that front-line services will continue to be a priority.

The government has promised to support a new facility for Manitobans living with cancer as well as expanding the Women's Health Clinic.

"Manitobans want a government that builds our great public institutions and focuses on how we take care of each other and help everyone succeed," said Warnock.





**IN THIS ISSUE** The Ontario Federation of Labour chose Unifor's Chris Buckley as its new president at its recent convention. Quebec Council met in Quebec City, and Unifor welcomes the plan to reopen two Coast Guard stations closed by the former Harper Government. A climate change panel in Alberta struck the right balance.

## SJF in Colombia - advocating for strong oil worker unions

Colombia is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a trade union activist or even belong to a trade union. Each year, dozens of trade union leaders are murdered or disappear, while many more face death threats, violence, judicial persecution and legal repression.

It is in this context Unifor's Social Justice Fund supports the efforts of PASO (Protecto de Acompañamiento y Solidaridad Internacional), an international agency working with the national petroleum union of Colombia USO (Union Sindical Obrera) in Colombia's eastern plains.

The area is home to a large and diverse indigenous

population and residents have little access to education and inadequate housing. This creates a large pool of unskilled labour in need of the jobs provided by oil companies.

PASO provides protective accompaniment (visible support and witnesses to threatened activists) and advocacy, education and communications support to USO, which has been under attack as it tries to organize oil workers.

PASO engages Colombian and international authorities, and regularly works with the Canadian embassy and U.S. officials and NGOs in the area. It



The Social Justice Fund is working with the Union Sindical Obrera in Colombia to organize oil workers.

also accompanies USO representatives into the field to speak to workers at three large, multinational oil companies - Canadian-owned Pacific Rubiales Energy, Quifa and Cano Sur.

In 2011, Pacific Rubiales fired most of the 3,000

workers who joined USO, forcing them to leave the area under threat of violence and legal repression. USO organizers have since returned to the area, and an exiled labour leader has also been able to return.