



## **Update for Northern Pulp Unifor Members**

January 3, 2020

Since Premier Stephen McNeil's announcement on December 20, Unifor has met with company and government officials to determine next steps for workers at Northern Pulp, Local 440.

On January 2, Unifor met with government officials to discuss their plans for workers across the forestry sector. From Unifor, Executive Assistant to the National President Scott Doherty, Atlantic Regional Director Linda MacNeil, National Representative Ian Hutchison, and Shelley Amyotte from Communications attended. They met with Acting Deputy Minister for Labour and Advanced Education Ava Czapalay and Deputy Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs Kelliann Dean.

Premier McNeil announced a \$50 million transition fund for forestry workers that was of particular interest during the meeting, especially since the fund was never mentioned to the union, or anyone else, prior to his December 20 decision.

Government is in the early stages of planning and implementing the transition and is currently reaching out to different employers and industry groups to understand the scope of expected need as the January 31 closure of Northern Pulp approaches. Unifor leaders emphasized how important it was that the fund be used to assist workers directly and that any funds required for aiding an industry transition be taken from different government resources.

It was again made clear by the union that losing a key player like Northern Pulp in the tightly-interconnected forestry industry will cause unavoidable and permanent job loss. Finding new markets for pulp wood and chips would be costly, highly competitive and, in the end, not a workable solution to sustain Nova Scotia's forestry sector. Without a market for pulp wood, Nova Scotia will have a harder time implementing the recommendations for a [sustainable forestry sector outlined in the Lahey Report](#).

Your Unifor representatives made it clear that the best course of action for a viable and continued forest industry in the province is with Northern Pulp continuing to operate. We reiterated that the \$50 million should be used to assist all workers in the industry through a temporary shutdown of the mill to facilitate the construction of Northern Pulp's new effluent treatment facility (ETF).

We also suggested the idea of a third-party expert who could serve as intermediary between government regulators and the company to establish a firm and fair process and timelines for the necessary approvals to take place for construction of the ETF. Until now, the regulatory process has proved unpredictable and unclear to a company ready and willing to invest in Nova Scotia, its environment, and its workers.

Unifor remains committed to you as members of Local 440 and still sees the best possible outcome as one where you can remain in Nova Scotia and continue to earn a good family-supporting income doing what you love. The union also understands the scope of the impact of Northern Pulp's closure on the 11,500 workers across the wider forestry sector and 30,000 private woodlot owners and wants to see government do all it can to prevent widespread job loss and financial hardship.

We expect feedback to our recommendations and questions within a week to ten days.

Discussions with Northern Pulp and parent company Paper Excellence are ongoing.