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## **Council 4000 VIA Rail Bargaining Update**

As reported previously, formal opening of the 2015 round of negotiation with VIA Rail Canada took place on Friday October 30<sup>th</sup> with Unifor President Jerry Dias joining both Unifor Local 100 and Council 4000 bargaining committees. Council 4000 met again with the corporation starting on Monday, November 9 in Montreal where each side took this as the first opportunity to outline their bargaining objectives.

The corporation has presented numerous concessionary demands, including removing the Job Security benefits from so-called “seasonal” employees and decreasing the amount of time allowed under Article 13 of both collective agreements to assume new positions from 10 days to 48 hours; giving the corporation the ability to fill vacant assignments for much smaller portions of an ORS in Agreement 2; and significantly increasing the probationary and lock-in periods for new employees in Agreement 1, among others.

The union has presented proposals that would improve the lives of our members, including wage increases; benefit improvements; sick days; changes to part-time rules for Agreement 1; upgraded rest and held time conditions for Agreement 2, among others. We have also presented work rule changes that would be of no cost to the corporation to implement. Minor changes can often improve the working lives of our members. They also provide an opportunity to build goodwill between the parties at the outset of a negotiation.

The union has tabled a proposal that would address concerns we are encountering as a result of the corporation’s overzealous administration of its Attendance Management Program. Discussions have been determined and spirited. The bargaining team reminded the corporation that the original intent of this program was to address employees with significant and unavoidable absenteeism, not those employees who are very close to the target, nor those who are sick or injured. The union made it clear to the corporation that the credibility of the entire program is undermined if the ongoing abuse is not addressed. Your bargaining team will be persistent and consistent in its desire to address this matter during negotiations.

The support and solidarity of our membership will be important as we go through the negotiations process. If you have any questions about the bargaining process or how to make your voice heard, speak to your Regional Representative, your local Union Representative, or visit [www.unifor4000.com](http://www.unifor4000.com) or use the Twitter hashtag: #Unifor4000VIAnegs.

The Council 4000 Bargaining Committee heads back to the bargaining table the week of November 23 to 27 inclusive, while Local 100 will start its bargaining with VIA on Agreement 3 matters the week of December 7<sup>th</sup> in Montreal.

In Solidarity,  
Council 4000 Master Bargaining Committee