

# From The Hall

## I.B.E.W. Local 2067

Newsletter #31 / June 7, 2018

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Greetings Brother and Sisters of Local 2067,

In February 2018, Environment and Climate Change Canada published proposed amendments to Canada's traditional coal-fired electricity regulations that would accelerate the phase-out of coal by 2030. According to the position of the federal government, this would help Canada achieve its goal of 90 percent non-emitting electricity by 2030.

As you may or may not have heard, on Wednesday April 25<sup>th</sup>, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change Canada, Catherine McKenna, appointed a [Just Transition Task Force](#) for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities to provide the Government with expert advice about how to make the accelerated phase-out of coal-fired electricity a fair transition for workers and communities.

The Government of Canada suggests that a "just transition" is an approach to economic and environmental policy that aims to minimize the impact on workers and communities in the transition to a low-carbon economy. It is suggested that the approach includes involving workers and their communities in decisions that would affect their livelihoods, identifying and supporting economic opportunities for the future, and helping workers and communities to succeed and benefit from the transition.

The Task Force includes representatives from labour, business, and municipal government, as well as sustainable development and workforce development experts. The Task Force will hear from workers and communities affected by the coal phase-out, and will consult stakeholder groups and governments. It will report to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change with recommendations about how best to support coal workers and communities in a successful transition. The Terms of Reference and more information on the Task Force can be found at the following link:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/climate-change/task-force-just-transition.html>.

The Task Force will be in Saskatchewan the week of June 11, meeting with a number of government and stakeholder representatives to receive information and suggestions on:

- the scale and types of impacts the accelerated phase out of coal-fired electricity may have on directly affected workers and communities;
- opportunities to transition affected workers and communities toward new economic opportunities;
- opportunities to leverage existing economic development and infrastructure funds, and employment and training supports; and,
- gaps in policy and programs to support the transition.

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2067 does not support the acceleration on the phase out of traditional coal fired generation, but would rather see an approach taken that would see that plants phased out in an economically and environmentally responsible method should the feasibility not exist to make the existing generation units compliant with the required legislation. As such, we will work with our affected employers, both SaskPower and Westmoreland, as well as the Provincial and Federal governments to enable the facilities to operate under a equivalency agreement until such time as they are unable to operate and can be replaced in an economically responsible manner.

It is unfortunate that the purpose of this taskforce is not to deal with the matter of continuing operation but rather to deal with the impact of the transition away from coal fired generation, and it could not have come at a worse time for us as we know that the provincial government and SaskPower have made no decision on the existing units that have not been retrofitted with carbon capture technology.

We will be meeting with the members of the appointed committee to discuss the possible impacts that this will have not just on our members working in the mining and generation sector but in all sectors of the Local. We will be addressing the impacts of plant closures on members and their communities and submitting requests for assistance for these members and communities should the facilities be required to retire. It is our desire to request everything imaginable with the hopes that in the end, it will not be required; but should it become our reality, we will have asked for enough so that the impact to the members and their communities will be softened significantly.

We know the next few months will be difficult ones as decisions are made on the equivalency agreements and the futures of the generation units in the City of Estevan and the community of Coronach. We would ask that members and their families attend the open meetings held by the committee in each of those communities and voice your opinions on your concerns and needs should the plants be required to cease operation to comply with imposed federal regulations.

The Task Force will be travelling to **Estevan** on **Tuesday, June 12** and would like to meet with workers that may be affected by the coal phase-out. The meeting will be held at the Days Inn Beefeater Plaza (**1305 9th Street, Estevan**) from **6:30 to 8:00 pm**.

The Task Force will be travelling to **Coronach** on **Wednesday, June 13** and would like to meet with workers that may be affected by the coal phase-out. The meeting will be held at the **Coronach Town Hall (212 1st Street East)** from **6:30pm to 8:00pm**.

In Solidarity

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