

October 5, 2012

TO: Locals - DFO
National Executive
National and Regional E.O. Representatives

Re: **Fisheries and Oceans' National Union-Management Consultation Committee**

The DFO National UMCC met on September 13th, 2012 with Brother Todd Panas, National President, and Sister Lorraine Power-Green, Regional Vice-President, NL Region, attending. The following is a synopsis of the discussions held.

Marc Gregoire, Commissioner, Coast Guard, chaired the meeting and UEW added three new items to the agenda.

Diane Orange, ADM, Human Resources, reviewed the *Minutes* and provided an update on the Parking for Persons with Disability issue. Currently, DFO is not implementing the new parking strategy but will eventually be implementing a parking-fee practice and clarified that the Department's obligation to duty to accommodate was to provide persons with disabilities with parking but did not include paying for it.

On the issue of the *tracking tool* proposed for NUMCC meetings, UEW expressed that it had no interest in a process that would add bureaucracy to the process.

A brief on *WFA* activities was provided by Trevor Swerdfager, ADM, Transformation, and the Department recited the same information as it delivered during the last *WFA* announcement. On Alternation, the Department advised that it had facilitated two alternations. UEW requested that the numbers on Alternation be provided as they occur.

Supplemental on SOR status: Satellite Area Offices will be closing which will "impact" 23 officers and field supervisors who will receive relocation offers. All offices identified for closure will be closed by April 2014.

With respect to the *Public Service Employee Survey*, the Department sent an invitation to the Bargaining Agents to participate in discussions and as a result of that invitation, Brother Todd Panas participated in a meeting on September 24, 2012. During discussions with the Department, UEW raised concerns with respect to the 2% for training (which is not being applied although it is part of the Department's training plans), the fact that budgets are stretched to the limit due to the Strategic Operating Review (SOR) and Strategic Review, and employees being denied training because of management difficulties with its operational requirements.

In response, the Deputy expressed concern with the delay in getting the action plan out.

With respect to *Disability Management*, UEW expressed concern that Human Resources had a Disability Case Management position which has been abolished and the tasks are now being pushed to the sectors where employees/managers are not trained to deal with the issues.

In response, the Department indicated that Disability Management is a complex issue that needs to cover prevention of sickness, protection of privacy and a progressive return to work. The Deputy Minister also added that both Union and Management need to know where their employees/members are and Managers need to be aware of financial implications as well as ensuring that employees are being taken care of.

With respect to *Letters of Expectation*, UEW brought up the issue and indicated that in UEW's opinion, it should be part of the Performance Review Section of Goals & Objectives. UEW questioned the real purpose of this document and wanted to know why it was created. UEW feels that this is a form of progressive discipline and that the document seems to want to circumvent oral reprimand.

In response, the Department indicated that these letters are not placed on an employee's file and they are not to be considered as discipline. They are a tool for managers to use. UEW then reaffirmed its position that this process is circumventing the Performance Review and Assessment of Potential (PRAP) process. The Department then advised that it would go back to the Regions to get more information and indicated that it wished to have more discussions on this issue.

New Items

Composition of RUMCC - UEW shared concerns that some departments are trying to reduce the number of Labour Representatives at Regional meetings. For instance, the Central and Arctic Region does not want Local Presidents to attend RUMCC meetings. UEW indicated that at this point in time, the information received indicates that this type of directive is coming from Ottawa.

The Department reassured bargaining agents that this is not coming from the Department and that it has no issue with Local Presidents attending RUMCC meetings.

Paternalistic Management Styles - UEW related this issue to the Public Service Employee Survey. UEW reaffirmed that this style of management can have a huge negative impact on employees and this is happening in departments across the country. UEW therefore asked whether or not the DFO Deputy Minister was willing to look at this.

In response, the Deputy Minister spoke to the fact that the Department operates in a command/control environment and that Senior EXs have to participate in a 2-day workshop on performance management which includes sessions on how they manage people.

Hours of Work re combining breaks - UEW asked why the Employer was changing the flexibility of our members when it comes to combining their two 15-minute coffee breaks which allows them to take a one-hour lunch. UEW stressed that these types of arrangements are not counterproductive but rather are a huge benefit to the Health & Wellness of our members -- their employees.

In response, the Department explained this advice comes directly from Ottawa which advises the sectors requiring advice not to allow the combining of breaks for employees so that they can take a longer lunch. However, the Department also added that a manager may always use his/her discretion on a case-by-case basis.

UEW took the position that doing this puts in jeopardy the ability of managers to manage when they suddenly find out that a long-time practice is no longer the right thing to do. UEW also referred to the prevalent paternalistic attitude that is growing within the Department which is ignoring the work/life balance of our members. UEW then asked if the Department would prefer that employees/members submit a grievance and wondered where the balance in equity was when such decisions are taken.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. with the next meeting scheduled for December 10th, 2012.

Submitted on behalf of the national office