United Steelworkers Alberta Lobby 2017

December 4 & 5, 2017 | Edmonton, Alberta

For the first time ever, the USW conducted “Lobby Days” at the Alberta Legislature in Edmonton. USW District 3 put out the call to our local unions in the province, and 23 members from four local unions participated in the training and lobbying. The members represented mining, wood products, health care, telecommunications, manufacturing and steel.

Training – USW members gathered at the Matrix Hotel in Edmonton and participated in basic training on: how government works; why the union is involved in politics and legislative action; and how to develop a lobbying plan. The lobbyists also attended Question Period on Monday, December 4. USW was acknowledged and the lobbyists were introduced by Labour Minister, Christina Gray.



Meetings with MLAs – Participants were encouraged to meet with their own Member of the Legislative Assembly, to introduce themselves as a constituent and member of the United Steelworkers. Most participants were able to meet their MLAs. Meetings took place with NDP members: Michael Connolly (Calgary-Hawkwood), Erin Babcock (Stony Plain), Trevor Horne (Spruce Grove-St. Albert) and Jon Carson (Edmonton-Meadowlark), Eric Rosendahl (West Yellowhead), Barb Miller (Red Deer South); and UPC member Wayne Drysdale (Grande Prairie-Smoky).

Meetings with Ministers & Ministerial Staff – The District set-up meetings with a number of Ministers with key portfolios that have impacts on our members in the industries they work. The group met with:

- Minister of Labour, Christina Gray *(pictured above)*: A group of members from a number of different locals and sectors met with Minister Gray and her Chief of Staff. We discussed a range of issues from Bill 17 (Labour Code and Employment Standards changes), the minimum wage, Bill 30 (WCB and OHS changes), and the Coal Transition Program.

- Minister of Services Alberta, Stephanie Mclean: A group of members, primarily from USW 1944, met with Minister Mclean. We discussed government contracts with TELUS and ensuring that TELUS employees and USW members enjoy that work. The Minister also has the Status of Women file and issues such as reducing structural barriers to women in male dominated industries, with a focus on childcare.



- Minister of Infrastructure, Sandra Jansen *(next page, centre photo)*: A group of members from USW 5220 met with the Minister and her Chief of Staff. We explained the need to include local purchasing in any government procurement policies, using the example of AltaSteel in Edmonton, which has construction rebar as 50% of its production. We explained that rebar made at AltaSteel is 100% recycled, has a lower carbon footprint and supports thousands of Alberta jobs.

- Minister of Agriculture and Forests, O'Neil Carlier *(pictured above)*:
  A group of members from USW 1-207 met with the Minister and his staff to discuss issues that are relevant to our membership in the forestry and wood manufacturing

sector, such as the Softwood Lumber Agreement, the protection of caribou, and the emergence of the Mountain Pine Beetle in Alberta.

- Parliamentary Secretary, Economic Development, Jessica Littlewood: A group of members from USW 1595 met with the Parliamentary Secretary, along with the Chief of Staff for Minister Deron Bilous (Economic Development), Heather Mack. We raised issues and questions around the Coal Transition, the lack of on-the-ground activity following the announcements and the issues being faced by members who are working under the cloud of pending layoffs as a result of the transition away from coal-fired electricity generation.

- Chief of Staff to the Health Minister: A group of members from USW 1-207 met with Alissa Brandt, on behalf of the Minister of Health, who is also the Deputy Premier and was unable to get out of the Legislature for a meeting. We discussed issues in healthcare, including working short, funding uncertainty, violence in the workplace, lack of supplies, dignity and respect for residents, as well asother issues that impact healthcare workers.







- Minister of Municipal Affairs, Shaye Anderson *(above left photo)*: Minister Anderson (a member of USW 1944) met informally with a number of USW members and staff throughout the days we were lobbying. This included meeting with a small group on Sunday afternoon before the lobby and coming out of session to chat with lobbyists in the Legislature hallways and foyer.

Reception – USW also hosted a reception for Ministers, Government MLAs and their staff. The event was well-attended, with greetings from the Government being brought by the MLA for Edmonton-Decore (and member of UFCW) Chris Nielson. The reception was also attended by Alberta Federation of Labour Secretary-Treasurer, Siobhan Vipond, and government relations staff, Chris Gallaway.

The following MLAs attended:

- Chris Nielson, Edmonton Decore
- Michael Connolly, Calgary-Hawkwood
- Jon Carson, Edmonton-Meadowlark
- Annie McKitrick, Sherwood Park
- Hon. David Eggen, Edmonton-Calder (Minister of Education)
- Craig Coolahan, Calgary-Klein
- Erin Babcock, Stony Plain
- Bruce Hinkley, Westakiwin-Camrose
- Colin Piquette, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater
- Hon. Sandra Jansen, Calgary-North West (Minister of Infrastructure)

