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Statements

Renewed call for Public Inquiry on the Anniversary of the Lakeland Sawmill Explosion

Vancouver – The following is a statement from Irene Lanzinger, President of the BC Federation of Labour, marking the fourth anniversary of the Lakeland sawmill explosion:

“It has been four long years since the tragic explosion at the Lakeland sawmill in Prince George on April 23, 2012. That tragic event killed Alan Little and Glenn Roche, and seriously injuring another 21 workers.

It followed three short months after the deadly explosion at the Babine sawmill on Burns Lake, on January 20, 2012, that killed Carl Charlie and Robert Luggi, and seriously injured twenty others.

Coroner’s inquests were held in 2015 into these explosions, but these inquests, as a strictly fact-finding process, left the families and the victims with more questions than answers.

No justice or substantive changes resulted from these inquests. It is important to note that the lay jury’s recommendations, although comprehensive and well-intentioned, are only voluntary and do not have the power to ensure the necessary changes are made in order to hold the employers, the government, and the Workers’ Compensation Board accountable.

After four years of asking, there are still critical questions left unanswered, including why did the policies and practices that are supposed to protect workers fail to do so?

That is why on the anniversary of this fatal explosion, the BC Federation of Labour is renewing our call for Premier Christy Clark to finally be accountable to the people of Lakeland, and immediately establish an independent public inquiry to ensure tragedies like this never happen again.

The National Day of Mourning on April 28 is an important reminder for everyone to mourn for the dead and fight for the living. The surviving families and the victims of Lakeland deserve justice. It is time for real and meaningful changes that will protect working people in BC.”