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Statements

Coroner’s Inquest into Lakeland sawmill explosion highlights the need for independent public inquiry

Vancouver – The following is a statement from Irene Lanzinger, President of the BC Federation of Labour:

“I want to thank the jury for their work on this inquest, and am pleased to see some strong directives regarding strengthening joint health and safety committees and reinforcing workers’ rights, including full and meaningful participation in incident investigations.

In addition, recommendations regarding enhanced capacity to pursue criminal negligence charges in cases of workplace serious injury and death are essential. The BC Federation of Labour, along with the United Steelworkers, has long demanded that negligent employers be held accountable.

However, there remain some glaring holes in the recommendations coming from this inquest. The BC Federation of Labour continues to insist that the systemic issues within WCB and the need for more prescriptive regulations must be fully examined, and that requires a full public inquiry.

The mandate of the Coroner’s Inquest, as a strictly fact-finding process, is too restrictive to achieve this.

Along with the United Steelworkers, the workers, and the family and friends of the killed and injured workers, the BCFED maintains the position that Premier Christy Clark must establish an independent public inquiry to ensure tragedies like these never happens again.”