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Releases

# Injured workers should be first in line for WCB “surplus”: BCFED

Improving benefits for injured workers and strengthening workplace safety should be the Workers’ Compensation Board’s top priority in using its “surplus,” BCFED President Sussanne Skidmore said today.

The WCB — known by many as WorkSafeBC — announced Monday it would use $570 million from the Accident Fund to keep employer premiums frozen for the ninth straight year. That brings the total diverted from the fund for subsidizing employer premiums to $3 billion since 2019.

“The so-called surplus in that fund was built on the backs of injured workers, with the deep cuts the BC Liberals and John Rustad made to benefits and pensions when they were in government,” Skidmore said. “Instead of billions of dollars in handouts to employers, the WCB should be making up for that lost ground.”

“Employers are paying less now than they did a decade ago,” BCFED Secretary-Treasurer Hermender Singh Kailley pointed out.

“How is it that the WCB somehow can’t afford to treat workers with psychological injuries fairly, can’t afford to restore pensions and can’t afford to put more into workplace inspections and enforcement — but can afford to keep employer premiums artificially low?”

“Businesses make it sound like they’re contributing to the fund out of charity,” Skidmore said. “But this is the deal they made decades ago so injured workers would give up the right to sue them.

Skidmore called on the WCB Board of Directors to reverse the premium decision. “If the fund really has more than the WCB needs to meet its commitments, they should invest that in making workers safer and treating injured workers more fairly.”