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Releases

BCFED PRESIDENT VISITS LOCKED OUT WORKERS IN KELOWNA

Kelowna, BC—On Monday morning, B.C. Federation of Labour President Jim Sinclair joined several dozen members the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 213, employed at Fortis BC, who has been locked out by the company which declared $187 million in profits last year.

The workers we're joined by members of the Canadian Office and Professional Employees' Union (COPE) Local 378 also employed at Fortis BC, who have been respecting the picket line since the lockout began more than two months ago.

"Thank you for standing together against this company which is guilty of disrespecting the work you do every day for more than 150,000 customers". Sinclair told the workers."In the cold, the rain, and in the dark, you are the ones that power the customers and power this company".

The company pushed through the lockout after forcing a vote of union members on the final offer. Union members rejected the company's offer by eight-eight (88) percent.

Several workers expressed frustration over the company's moves to ignore the essential service order of the Labour Relations Board. The company continues to do work that has been ruled non-essential by the Board.

"The customers of this corporation respect the work that these workers do day in and day out, and we need to send a strong message to the company that the lockout must end and a fair settlement must be reached," said Sinclair.

Sinclair noted Fortis BC CEO John Walker earned more than 1.3 million dollars last year while offering far less to its unionized employees. Since 2010 Walker's base salary increased by fifteen (15) percent to $520,000 while the remainder of the 1.3 million is comprised of incentives and bonuses.

Fortis BC is a regulated monopoly that is guaranteed profit based on the cost of operation.

The parties go to mediation later this week.