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Releases

Promised review of Temporary Worker Program fails to deliver

More TFW permits requiring Mandarin language to work in north east mines revealed

Vancouver, BC – On the same day it was revealed that nearly 100 additional TFW permits issued in northern BC relied on a mandarin language requirement, BC labour leaders are criticizing the federal government's review of the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program as incomplete and inadequate, after participating in the only session planned for BC.

Officials from Human Resources & Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada conducted a 90-minute teleconference call with more than a dozen BC stakeholders. Labour participants on the call received invitations to participate only a few days before the call was to take place. The labour movement was the only, non-employer, non-government organization to be included in the BC consultation.

"Consultation needs to be more meaningful and engage the full breadth of stakeholders, said Jim Sinclair, President of the B.C. Federation of Labour.

"If this exercise is limited to conference calls then the review is a complete sham aimed at placating a concerned Canadian public," said Stephen Hunt, Western Canada Director of the United

Steelworkers. “Every day brings growing evidence the Temporary Foreign Worker Program is not working, and Canadians deserve better from their government.”

BC Building Trades Executive Director Tom Sigurdson noted that not once has an official from HRSDC ever contacted his organization to ask about the availability of local workers, before TFW permits are granted. “How do they really know if a shortage exists, if they’ve never bothered to ask?”

“British Columbians have been clear; they don’t support the TFW program. Responsible employers agree with the labour movement, immigration not Temporary Foreign Workers, should be used to solve long-term labour shortages,” said Sinclair.

Today’s call comes on the heel of news reports that an additional 95 permits were granted to Canadian Dehua for the Gething coal mine, near Hudson’s Hope, BC, again stipulating a mandarin language requirement. Dehua is one of the original proponents also involved in HD Mining’s Murray River coal mine.

“This is an important test for our federal and provincial governments,” Sinclair stated. “Will they engage in investigating this newest revelation, or are unions forced once again to turn to the judicial system and the public for assistance.”

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