



## Statement of Solidarity with Occupy Calgary

November 8, 2011

The peaceful Alberta citizens currently occupying Calgary's Olympic Plaza have a powerful message and, most importantly, are helping to make positive change in our province. It would be wrong to evict them.

The Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) supports the right of Occupy Calgary protesters in their call for democratic and peaceful intervention into an economic system that has been failing to address the concerns and meet the needs of working people locally, nationally, and on a global scale.

Our affiliate members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 37 (representing the City of Calgary outside workers), Amalgamated Transit Union Local 583 (representing Calgary Transit and various City of Calgary employees), and members of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1374 (representing Greyhound, Brewster and Red Deer Transit Employees) stand in solidarity with Occupy Calgary.

We support their rights as citizens of Calgary to gather in a public space and to push for change. Any attempt to evict them would be an attempt to sweep them and their legitimate public concerns under the carpet.

They have promoted the eminently sensible Robin Hood Tax initiative, which would introduce a tiny fee on financial transactions – paid by banks, not people – that would raise hundreds of billions of dollars globally for such things as fighting poverty. This is not an outrageous idea – indeed, it has been supported by the like of billionaire Bill Gates – and the Occupy movement is keeping it alive.

Even Bank of Canada Governor Mark Carney – a former Goldman Sachs investment banker and newly appointed by the G20 as the man to overhaul international banking industry – has acknowledged that the Occupy demonstrations are a “democratic expression of views” and are “entirely constructive.”

The Occupy movement is helping to keep pressure on governments to introduce vital reforms to the banking industry to prevent the kind of recession that swept the globe in 2008 and caused so much harm to so many.

We support the Occupy movements because they offer a sign of hope that a better, fairer, and more tolerant world may yet emerge from the ashes of the ongoing global financial crisis.

The powers that be have often sought to confront and quash peaceful protests, like those by supporters of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi. Years later, with the benefit of hindsight, those same societies looked back at the protesters and applauded their courage and conviction – and with horror of the attempts by authorities to silence them.

We must learn from those lessons. We urge the City of Calgary to take the long view of this issue. Any attempt to confront peaceful Occupiers and force them to leave risks staining the good name of the City of Calgary.