



CUPE BC Environment Committee Report to Convention – May 2019

This committee has been working together since October 19th, 2017. The Terms of Reference state that we are to build membership capacity and participate in the efforts to promote awareness of environmental issues and their effects on CUPE members' health and well being.

One of our responsibilities is to make recommendations to the CUPE BC Executive Board to develop initiatives that protect the environment for our CUPE members in the workplace and community as a whole.

We also create resolutions dealing with environmental issues that are debated at convention.

When we met at the One Big Committee Meeting in October 2017, we reviewed the CUPE BC Action Plan and came up with the Committee's key goals.

Key goals from the CUPE BC Action Plan that were identified are as follows:

1. Strengthen our membership by:
 - Educating our members on important issues and campaigns (*see 2019 Resolution #2*).
 - Ensuring that equity issues, access, and environmental sustainability are considered and supported in all our activities (*see 2018 Resolution #2, and 2019 Resolution #3 and #6*).
2. Defend the dignity of our work by:
 - Promoting support for public services (*see Member Engagement and Education section*)
 - Advocating for inclusive, safe, respectful, sustainable, equitable, and secure work for all our members (*see Member Engagement and Education section*).

3. Build solidarity and capacity by:
 - Assisting CUPE Locals in BC to develop better communication tools, build stronger ties to each other, and improve coordination (*see 2019 Resolution #1, Member Engagement and Education, and Future Objectives section*).
 - Implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action relevant to our Union (*see Future Objectives section*).
4. Engage in political action by:
 - Identifying and supporting progressive candidates for the 2018 local government election (*see 2018 Resolutions #1, #5, and #6*).

2018 Resolutions:

In 2018, the Committee put forward six resolutions as follows:

1. Lobby the Provincial government to direct BC Hydro to pay compensation to the communities affected by Site C dam by funding public education, social services and other community needs.
2. Audit and quantify the carbon emissions from travel, electrical energy use, and waste to determine the "Carbon Footprint" of CUPE Conventions.
3. Develop a Green Statement to be read out at all CUPE BC meetings and events and encourage locals to use the Green Statement at all their events.
4. Encourage its members to boycott all Nestle products.
5. Lobby the BC Provincial Government to insist that bitumen from Alberta be refined at the place of extraction and ask CUPE National to lobby the Federal Government to insist that the bitumen from Alberta be refined at the place of extraction.
6. Oppose the BC government's decision to continue the use of and export of LNG.

Of these resolutions #4 and #5 passed.

2019 Resolutions:

Two new resolutions anticipated to have an impact on reducing waste and cost-savings, and celebrating Local success stories are being proposed. The committee feels that some of its previous resolutions are still relevant and important to pursue, and so has

brought forward 2018 Resolutions #3 and #6 and two resolutions from 2017 for reconsideration. The Environment Committee's six resolutions for this year are as follows:

1. Provide one convention binder per local, and one additional binder for every five delegates that the Local is entitled to.
2. CUPE BC will establish an annual recognition program that celebrates individuals/locals that have made a significant positive sustainable impact on the environment in the community they serve.
3. CUPE BC call on the Province of BC to tighten groundwater laws as BC is the only jurisdiction in Canada that does not charge corporations for groundwater use.
4. Develop a Green Statement to be read out at all CUPE BC meetings and events, and encourage Locals to use the Green Statement at all their events.
5. Encourage all members to sign the Leap Manifesto.
6. Oppose the BC government's decision to continue the use of and export of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).

Member Engagement and Education

In addition to trying to achieve its goals through resolutions, the committee also endeavours to educate CUPE members at Convention in a fun and informative way. At the 2018 Convention, the committee created a bingo game card to engage and educate members on some of the sustainable practices they could easily do while at Convention. This year, the Committee will also use the well-received game as an opportunity to raise awareness about our resolution related to the Leap Manifesto. The committee anticipates that by doing this, we'll raise environmental action and awareness regardless of whether or not the resolution makes it to the convention floor. The committee will also encourage our zero-waste initiative by choosing to not offer "swag" at our booth at convention this year. SWAG (Stuff We All Get) are items that are produced in mass quantities with low cost and quality and are often items that are thrown away after a short use, so the committee will be offering a healthy snack of BC apples. Book store gift cards with recommended readings on environmental issues will be offered as prizes.

Another intended educational component at our booth is to feature a hydroponic station similar to what was displayed at the CUPE National Convention in 2017. This green food security technology is gaining momentum by appearing in our communities, schools, and businesses as an alternative to conventional gardening. Our goal is to bring attention to the different alternatives to food security options.

On January 23, 2019, 10 members of the Environment Committee participated in the Green Action for Stewards workshop. This workshop focuses on:

- how environmental issues relate to our workplace;
- what stewards should be aware of;
- what our workplaces are doing to mitigate environmental impact;
- how greening our workplace impact workers;
- what a green workplace looks like; and
- what action stewards can take to address important environmental issues.

This was a great opportunity to share and learn from each other and to bring that valuable knowledge back to their respective Locals. This committee highly recommends and encourages all locals to obtain this training for their members. It's an excellent first step in going green!

Future Objectives

As our two-year term comes to a conclusion, we hope to one day see a CUPE BC Legacy Project come to fruition. Our committee discussed what this Legacy Project could look like - for example, a natural area in a BC community that could be purchased and preserved as a park to allow for the enjoyment of the environment and raise awareness to the work that CUPE BC does. Funding strategies were also discussed.

Our committee discussed how we could implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action and it was suggested to do a Blanket Ceremony at Convention though were concerned participants may not have adequate support for the potentially deep emotional impact of the Ceremony. We suggest that the future environment committees could collaborate with the Indigenous Committee to implement an activity to address Truth and Reconciliation.

It's encouraging to hear how some locals have incorporated Green initiatives into their workplaces by encouraging their employers to switch to environmentally friendly products or by bargaining Green language into their collective agreements. We hope this continues and grows throughout all the Locals. Any action in 'Going green' is a good action.

"Going green" means to pursue knowledge and practices that can lead to more environmentally friendly and ecologically responsible decisions and lifestyles, which can help protect the environment and sustain its natural resources for current and future generations.

Sustainable resource guide, Middletown Thrall Library.

Respectfully submitted by:

Anita Early, Chair
Tobias Daniel, Co-Chair
Michele Favenger, Secretary
Michelle Baski
Margot Croft
Nancy Fee
Lisa Mead
Carol Nordby
Erik Sagmoen
Alyssa Schubert
Carlo Sia
Janet Thorpe
David Wieler
Stephen Beasley - Communications Representative
Ian McLean - Staff Advisor

May 2019

move**Up**