

February 4, 2021

Via email

To: CUPE BC Local & District Council Presidents

Dear friends,

This morning, I notified members of the CUPE BC Executive Board and staff that I will not be seeking re-election as president of CUPE British Columbia at the upcoming convention in May. While this was a very difficult decision for me to reach, I know in my heart it is the right decision for myself and CUPE BC.

With the possible end of the novel coronavirus pandemic in sight, as vaccines are coming online, this is the time for someone new in the president's position to lead CUPE BC through the economic recovery for our province.

I have been a member of CUPE for 37 years and an activist for most of them. I am proud of the contributions I have been able to make within our union and in the broader labour movement in BC. It is especially pleasing to think about the many people I have been able to assist in workplaces across BC. I will never forget the time in 1983 when I went to see a CUPE 15 shop steward in Vancouver City Hall to help me file a grievance to challenge being turned down by the employer for a full-time position. The union won the grievance and I was awarded the position. The power of the union was made clear to me and I think it was the planting of the union activism seed within me. People helping people is what makes the labour movement so special.

I have been very humbled to have been elected by union members over the years to various positions including President of CUPE Local 15, a position that I held for 12 years. Being in the president's position in 2007 was by far the most challenging and rewarding time for me, as I reflect back on the 3-month strike Local 15 members engaged in against the City Vancouver and Mayor Sam Sullivan. This was a hard-fought strike that the union won bringing improved job protection and benefits for 3500 public sector workers.

Since 2013, I have been one of the full-time officers at CUPE BC, first being elected as Secretary-Treasurer and then as President in 2015. I ran on a platform of increasing CUPE BC's political action in local and provincial elections, modernizing the division's communications and systems, enhancing relationships with key stakeholders and building our union. I am pleased with the progress we have made on all of these fronts, including helping elect Premier Horgan with a strong majority government a few months ago.

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Today I believe CUPE BC is the strongest our division has ever been. During my tenure, we have grown from 82,000 to now more than 100,000 members affiliated to CUPE BC. It is a privilege every day to work with a dedicated CUPE BC and CUPE National Staff team who are clearly committed to helping our union. The same goes for the CUPE BC Executive Board which is comprised of an amazing and diverse group of trade unionists who share the vision I have of making BC a better place for everyone.

In the days ahead, I look forward to continuing my work and getting ready for the CUPE BC convention. After that I plan to look for new opportunities to help out and offer my assistance. Retirement is nowhere in sight for me, but the time has come to turn the page.

Thank you for everything you do for our members and our communities, and thank you for your support over the years. It has been an honour.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Faoro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" and last name "Faoro" clearly distinguishable.

Paul Faoro
President
CUPE British Columbia

PF/KB

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