



Steelworker activist helps bring reconciliation to B.C. mining code

Julia McKay is adding to her hat collection. An activist with USW Local 9346 at Teck in British Columbia, McKay is also one of the USW's first Indigenous Education Co-ordinators, facilitating the Unionism on Turtle Island course for Steelworkers in Western Canada. She is also exploring ways to support and engage Indigenous members and supporting locals in their work.

In addition to these roles, McKay, who traces her Indigenous ancestry to the Tsim Shian First Nation, based on the B.C. Coast, has been serving since 2022 as the USW labour representative on the United Nations Declaration Sub-committee of the Code Review Committee, which is updating the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in B.C.

In addition to bringing her health and safety and Indigenous experience to this work, McKay is learning a lot.

After many years of advocacy and pressure, including from the USW, the federal Parliament passed a law in 2021 to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in Canada.

B.C. went first, though, passing a law adopting UNDRIP at the provincial level in 2019 – the only province to date to do so.

The B.C. Declaration Act “aims to create a path forward that respects the human rights of Indigenous Peoples while introducing better transparency and predictability in the work we do together.”

McKay's sub-committee, a group of 10 people from the mining sector – most with Indigenous ancestry – meets every month or second month in Vancouver, in-person and virtually.

“We are filtering the code through the UNDRIP lens, where we can enhance and add anything that has to do with UNDRIP,” says McKay.

The code has few references to First Nations and is out-of-date in various areas, she notes. For example, the code's language around exposures to particulate matter is from 1994.

The sub-committee also recommended updating the code's requirements for mine managers in responding to “reportable incidents,” which are cases of injury or the potential for injury.

The updated code lays out that a mine manager “must engage with First Nations that may be affected by reportable incidents to determine which reportable incidents must be reported to the First Nations.”

The sub-committee members include mechanics and people who are active in their bands and on their councils and working at the mines.

“Even with people from the ministry – though this is their job – you sometimes have to tell them how things actually

work on-site. That's a big reason why labour absolutely needs to be on these committees,” says McKay.

McKay joined the committee on recommendations from USW District 3 Director Scott Lunny and Staff Representative Dean Lott.

“I feel that anytime we're learning, expanding our knowledge, it's good. I come out of mining. It just makes me better at my job. My new position with the USW is focused on Indigenous engagement, and this is definitely hyper-focused on that,” says McKay.

“It's taken too long to get to this point. Now that the work is actually happening, that's good.”

Read & share: usw.to/4wA.

Unionism on Turtle Island

Did you know that the USW offers a course called Unionism on Turtle Island?

In this course, which is aimed at non-Indigenous Steelworkers, but open to all members, you will:

- Learn more about our shared history as Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.
- See how union struggles and Indigenous struggles connect.
- Discuss how individual members, locals, and our union as a whole can practise reconciliation.
- Learn from a local elder and ask any questions you might have about Indigenous cultures.
- Help make your local more effective in bargaining for and representing Indigenous members.

Ask your local union when the next course will be in your area.

Upcoming 2024 events

usw.ca/district-3-events

Mar. 3-8, 2024

2024 Next Generation Conference
Pittsburgh, PA

Mar. 11-12, 2024

B.C. Forest Workers Summit
Victoria, B.C.

Apr. 2024

USW Local Union Elections

Apr. 10-11, 2024

B.C. Legislative Action Conference
Victoria, B.C.

June 9-14, 2024

USW International Civil and Human Rights Conference
Detroit, MI

Aug. 18-23, 2024

USW International Health, Safety and Environment Conference
Pittsburgh, PA

Sept. 15-20, 2024

USW District 3 School
Cranbrook, B.C.

Oct 2-4, 2024

USW National Health, Safety and Environment & Justice Conference
Gatineau, QC

Oct. 19, 2024

B.C. Election

Oct. 28, 2024

Sask. Election

Oct. 28-31, 2024

USW District 3 Conference
Winnipeg, MB



New episodes posted monthly!
usw.ca/d3podcast

Renewing our commitment to fight racism

Every February, Steelworkers across Canada celebrate Black History Month and honour the work and legacies of Black workers and activists.

Over the years, many Black Steelworkers have come through the rank-and-file membership to serve their members and the union. They have been activists, mentors, and leaders and have paved the way for generations of Black Steelworkers to make a difference by challenging inequality in our union, our workplaces and our communities. We celebrate them always, but especially this month.

Steelworkers have always believed that we should play a significant role, in our union and in broader society, in the movement for racial justice. Throughout the year, and especially during Black History Month, as a union we take the time to reflect on how we represent Black and racialized workers. We must



actively oppose racism and continue to identify the ways in which we can strengthen our racial justice work through an anti-Black racism and anti-racism lens.

We will honour Black workers and activists by renewing our unwavering commitments to fight racism, discrimination and systemic barriers in the workplaces we represent, at bargaining tables, within our union and the labour movement.

Share your support: 17 cents/hr raise is not enough

The USW has launched a public letter-writing campaign to send emails to Hudson's Bay management to demand a fair contract now. The public is invited to send letters by going to usw.ca/hbc and filling in the form.

It only takes a few seconds to send a message to the bosses at Hudson's Bay that 17 cents is not enough for these workers. Tell Hudson's Bay to get back to the bargaining table with a better offer.

Strong as Steel Episode 6 out now!

USW International Vice-President at Large Roxanne Brown joins Director Scott Lunny to talk about Black History Month and our union's proud history of promoting and supporting equality. In collaboration with our allies, we have made significant progress in raising awareness and educating our members and communities on the

impact of anti-black racism, systemic racism, and oppression in our workplaces and communities. Mike Duhra, Assistant to the Director, and Reah Arora, USW Local 2009 member, talk about their experience of going to South Africa with the Steelworkers Humanity Fund and the USW Anti-Racism Committee.



New Alberta anti-trans legislation abusive towards vulnerable children

Young Albertans and all young Canadians deserve the freedom to be themselves and to learn and grow in a safe environment.

The new legislation introduced by Danielle Smith's provincial government rolls back much-needed protections for trans and queer youth at the moment they most need support, infringes on the health care and the bodily autonomy of trans children and youth, and violates their basic human rights.

"Our union has trans-identified members as well as members who have trans-identified or non-binary children who will be harmed by this new legislation that takes away their choices," said Scott Lunny, Director for Western Canada of the United Steelworkers union (USW).

"I would go even further to say this new legislation is abusive towards vulnerable children and intentionally targets the 2SLGBTQIA+ community," said Lunny.

"I have witnessed firsthand the struggles faced by children who are brave enough to express their true gender identity," said Catie Jones, a USW member and a mother of a transgender child who recently launched a petition urging politicians to stop this attack. **Please take a moment to show your support and sign the petition at usw.to/4w7.**

"This is not just about my child: it's about every transgender child in



Alberta. Our children deserve the right to their own gender identity and expression, as well as rights over their bodies," Jones said.

"Our province is refusing to protect these vulnerable members of our community. We need to stand together for our children's future where they can freely express themselves without fear or prejudice. Every child deserves acceptance, love, safety and freedom from discrimination, regardless of their gender identity," added Jones.

The USW maintains that the new legislation is a violation of human rights legislation, as well as equality rights protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and is part of a concerted effort to roll back gains by equity-seeking groups. The union asserts that Smith is promoting division for political purposes.

"It can be tough to feel like you're different, especially as a child or teenager, and Smith's new legislation will make life exponentially worse for those trying to figure out their gender identity. Danielle Smith must stop picking on children, their families and the medical practitioners who support their choices," said Lunny.



Andrew Mercier, B.C. Minister of State for Sustainable Forestry Innovation, dropped by Western Forest Products at Duke Point with MLA Sheila Malcolmson to talk about ensuring access to fibre and sustaining family-supporting union forestry jobs in Nanaimo.



Jason Prokopchuk, President of USW Local 7689, provided insights on private sector organizing and bargaining at the Saskatoon & District Labour Council AGM.



USW Local 1-207 Bargaining Committee for SRI Regent Homes in Lethbridge, Alberta, were hard at work negotiating for their members!

The USW, CFLPA and White Ribbon train first cohort for new Elevating Action program

USW and the Canadian Football Players' Association (CFLPA), and White Ribbon took the next steps in an important partnership to elevate action and end gender-based violence in workplaces and communities across Canada. The first cohort of CFLPA players and USW members were trained in early January as spokespeople and leaders in changing

workplace culture and challenging gender-based violence in workplaces and communities.

Once fully trained, members from the CFLPA and the USW will deliver the Elevating Action program in their unions, workplaces, and communities.

Learn more at: usw.ca/elevating-action-program

Fraser Lake Sawmill to close, 140 workers set to lose jobs

West Fraser Timber Co. Ltd. has announced the permanent closure of its Fraser Lake Sawmill in British Columbia, affecting the employment of 140 members of the USW.

Jeff Bromley, USW Wood Council Chair, expressed concern over the closure, emphasizing the ongoing struggles faced by USW members and the local community since the 2015 shutdown of the Endako Moly Mine.

“The closure announcement by West Fraser is a terrible blow to the USW members, their families and the local community, especially for a community struggling since their mine closed,” said Bromley.

While West Fraser expects to minimize the impact on affected members by offering employment opportunities at other company operations, the decision to close the sawmill is the result of the company’s inability to access economically-viable fibre in the region.

Bromley called on the government to ensure stability for B.C.’s forest industry, which supports 10,000 USW members and thousands of others in communities across the province. He highlighted the need for access to a sustainable working forest to preserve these jobs.

“The thousands of high-paying, rural community-supporting jobs are disappearing right before our eyes. It’s time for our province to decide if it wants to have a vibrant forest industry that supports good-paying jobs, Indigenous people and local economies,” said Bromley.

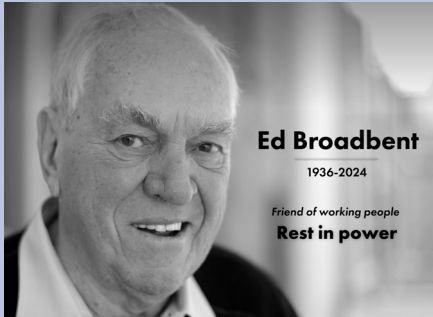
“We have big challenges posed by uncertain fibre supply, regulatory uncertainties, and escalating fibre unit costs that must be urgently addressed to sustain an industry capable of producing value-added, carbon-sink products. The government needs to make this a priority now,” he added.



USW Local 1-417 members at the Hudson’s Bay in Kamloops are demanding a fair contract now by holding public awareness actions. The USW’s “bat light” has been in full action, projecting “Fair Contract Now” onto Hudson’s Bay stores.



Our incredible team of new facilitators are gearing up their knowledge. These members underwent intensive training to empower and inspire our members across the district.



A champion for workers

We join millions across our country in mourning the loss of a great Canadian, a champion for working people and an unwavering fighter for social, economic and political justice. Ed Broadbent was a great friend to Steelworkers, to the labour movement and to working people everywhere. He inspired and was respected by so many Canadians because he shared their values and aspirations – that we can build a more equal country, committed to economic and social wellbeing for all. [Read more usw.to/4wJ](http://usw.to/4wJ).



Thank you, Rachel!

As leader of the Alberta NDP, Rachel Notley has consistently demonstrated her unwavering dedication to building a stronger Alberta for everyone. Throughout her tenure, Rachel has shown exceptional leadership, advocating for workers’ rights and championing the values of our union. As Rachel steps down from her role, she leaves a legacy of positive change and progress. Her contributions to the province will be remembered for years to come.

[Read more usw.to/4wL](http://usw.to/4wL)



Director Scott Lunny and Wood Council Chair Jeff Bromley join members from USW 1-2017 for a tour a sawmill in Prince George, B.C.



Alberta local union leaders came together to discuss important issues impacting their workplaces. They were joined by Deputy AB NDP Leader, Sarah Hoffman.