

GSU Locals 1 & 2 (Viterra)



May 17, 2023

To: All Local 1 (Viterra Country Operations) and Local 2 (Viterra Head Office) members

UPDATE #16

Bargaining Dates

Below are the current bargaining dates and details of what has occurred so far.

June 14, 2023 - *upcoming bargaining date*

May 30, 2023 - *upcoming bargaining date*

May 9, 10 and 11, 2023 - *cancelled*

April 26 & 27, 2023 - *both sides met*

No major progress was made in movement towards settlement though discussions lead to both sides clarifying their priorities.

Your bargaining committee wants to report to members about negotiations and ask for feedback so they cancelled the upcoming dates May 9 to 11, 2023.

April 4 & 5, 2023 - both sides met

Bargaining has reached a point where we are close to our limit of what you, our members, have told us to fight for. But your committee wants to report to members personally and hear what you all have to say. We will begin to plan and schedule bargaining update meetings that will begin after our next session. Regardless of the outcome of those next dates, we feel that it is time to meet.

March 7 & 8, 2023 - both sides met

The company and your committee each presented offers to bring both sides closer together but still not close enough. We kept up and reinforced that even though the company might not like certain proposals, they all came from you, the members, as a result of frustrations and anger about the current state of affairs.

January 31 & February 1, 2023 - both sides met

The company brought their money and wage offer and presented it to your committee. Your committee worked to review the offer and prepare a counter offer which was presented to the company on the second day. Your committee took a thoughtful approach and their counteroffer still maintained the focus and goal of achieving real gains for members. Including real wage increases and no aggregate pay, better hours or work language, clarity on car loading and understanding of the impact on workers and health and safety.

December 14 & 15, 2022 - both sides met

The company still did not bring any money or wage proposals but advised that they would next time. The company presented additional information about their proposals submitted, and your committee again said they wouldn't bargain with themselves and was frustrated about the time it has taken as we wait for the company to come to bargaining prepared.

November 24 & 25, 2022 - both sides met

The company still didn't bring money or wages to the table. Your committee again said we wouldn't negotiate until the company brings their money. We shared why we are asking for what we proposed because members told us they want and need these changes to the collective agreement.

November 16 & 17, 2022 - both sides met

Local 1 & 2 provided their full proposal package. Viterra provided some of their proposals but nothing about money or wages. We said we wouldn't change or withdraw any of our proposals until the company brought their entire package, including money and wages.

Additional Bargaining Committee Members

Your Board of Delegates met last night and on the agenda was a discussion about adding additional members to the bargaining committee to bring a specific perspective from customer account representatives and maintenance employees. They voted unanimously to consider the volunteers who put their names forward.

Unfortunately, they discovered that only one member put their name forward. This troubled the board that there was only one person who put their name forward, and they were concerned this was because not enough time was provided and more importantly, members did not know they could put their names forward.

The board voted and approved the extension of the time available for members to volunteer to be considered for the bargaining committee.

1. Any members who are Customer Account Representatives or Operations Maintenance staff and want to serve on the bargaining committee should email GSU General Secretary Steve Torgerson (steve@gsu.ca) and volunteer to have their name stand for election by the Board of Delegates.
2. This volunteering process will be open until Thursday, May 25, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.
3. All volunteering members will be given an opportunity to provide a statement of why they want to join the bargaining committee.
4. A Board of Delegates meeting will be convened on May 26 to elect additional members to the committee.

Your elected delegates will work to encourage members to volunteer and asks all CARs and Maintenance staff to consider volunteering to join the bargaining committee. Your voice is wanted, please step forward to strengthen your bargaining committee.

Bargaining Feedback Survey

Last week we held three ZOOM town hall meetings to great success. There was a good turnout with close to 100 people in attendance, as well as great questions and participation.

An idea was brought forward about sending a survey to members to encourage more feedback, last night your Board of Delegates agreed with the idea. Below is a short open text survey for members to provide their feedback on negotiations and the path they want to see bargaining progressing.

This survey is another opportunity for members who didn't attend the ZOOM meetings and can't make their Sub-Local meeting to be still able to be heard. If you haven't provided your feedback to your bargaining committee already, please consider doing so below.

Bargaining Feedback Survey

STIP Update

This is not a bargaining update but an update on what has taken place since the STIP was withheld by Viterra in March.

The Unfair Labour Practice that was filed was received and processed by the CIRB. Both Viterra and GSU have responded and provided their arguments for the CIRB to consider. We await the CIRB to get involved and resolve this by getting the 2022 STIP released.

We strongly encourage all members to consider what they can do to keep the pressure on Viterra to pay for the 2022 STIP. If you have an idea, talk to your elected representative, they can help bring your idea forward and share it with other locations.

Local 1 & 2 Stories

Below is another collection of stories for you to read. These stories keep getting submitted and it is a powerful thing to read them as they come in. Members are telling their personal stories about hardship, frustration, hope and fight. Know that the stories you submit will be seen and they do make a difference.

We also hope that sharing your story is helpful to you, saying what needs to be said and getting it out there can help.

If you haven't sent in your story or need to share a recent story, please follow the link below.

[**Share your Story**](#)

Any stories submitted will have any names or information removed to keep the member anonymous.

Local 1 & 2 Member Stories:

"What if instead of focusing on acquiring new elevators, we focused on treating our employees fairly. Pay fairly, with fair working hours, and the support that we need to get the job done. How are you supposed to do a good job taking on more employees when you can't handle the ones that you've got? That's like trying to put out a house fire with water from the kitchen tap."

"We sit and listen to a business update for the year discussing the recent acquisition of Gavilon more than it discussed the commendable job of the employees we already have. We come up with salary structures to pay new employees equitably, but make no moves to pay current and experienced employees anymore. Employee's who have been here for 10 years would be better off to quit now and get rehired for the same job at higher pay. We take 10 days and repeated follow-up emails to simple requests, and yet we say that we are customer-service based? We come up with some a variety purity discount on malt barley, by which we have to collect funds from customers who have already been paid as malt quality, and then come up with a procedure for further testing and yet tell no one. And who is the one making these phone calls? The CAR's, who get yelled and screamed at and are made to feel like robbers, while the people who are actually responsible for this never get to hear the customer's anger. Do they have trouble sleeping at night? I should hope so. Because for us CAR's who are on the front lines actually dealing with producers, it is the most nauseating feeling you could have, and many sleepless nights are had fretting about what we can do for them. But ultimately, we as an employee are powerless, and don't even have the supporting help of our employers to do such a terrible task."

"I've been with Viterra for 7 years now, it used to be a good place to work but now were just a number to them, it is horrible pay for what we do, I'm running the cleaners and such and not making any more money, when the train comes at a stupid hr., we have to be there to load cars for our shitty normal wage, its a complete joke, I've had other opportunity's to work elsewhere but I'm trying to give Viterra a chance but I really wish I would have left, "

"Over reading these stories, I can feel where everyone is at. Over time, the work atmosphere has shifted. I feel this every day when I come in to the office, there is more of a turnover of employees now than ever. I am still 'new' to the company (only a handful of years). The senior staff that are here can teach us all so much. This is not how upper management is handling it though. They are

bringing new people in, which is great, it is how I got my start. But pushing at those who have been here 'forever' and not showing respect to them is how I feel. Wages for these employees is very apparent. Don't increase wages for those who could run these facilities, but offer then new ones more than what the heart of this facility is getting.

Regarding STIP, from what I can see, it was a way to strive for the goals set out for us all. With them withholding this payment, it makes us all sit back and think what are our goals even good for. We had that carrot dangled in front of us and then ripped away. I know they wouldn't parent their kids this way, so what makes it ok to do to the employees that get you where you are. But what the hell, give everyone else their STIP, but not those in the union with renegotiations. That is some very shady shit, and speaks volumes on their principles. And puts all those others in a very bad spot when they are making facility visits, as it was not them who chose to withhold the others STIP. The goals set out for us all, benefit those who got theirs.... we we all work like the mediocre employees they pay and treat us like, guess what... No one will reach their goals. This is all team work, and you have divided our teams in the elevators."

"With all the last minute changes to car loading and struggling to communicate with our FOM, my mental health has taken a toll. I come home stressed and exhausted from the day. I find I am not getting support from higher ups. We have had high turnover in our elevator and it is hindering our profitability and efficiency and moral is at an all time low. It doesn't feel like I can speak up about issues going on.

I remember speaking to my manager about working from home one day a week to avoid the long commute I have, and help combat the high fuel pricing, and I was denied. I end up having to work through my lunch four of five days a week since we are so busy and gain no extra credit and are denied the extra help. I find that my salary is not enough to keep up with the rising cost of living, adding to the high amount of stress already. At the end of the year I will hope to get 1.5% even though inflation is more like 7%.

If you try finding a different job within Viterra, good luck unless you know someone higher up. You have better chances at the competition since Viterra doesn't seem to value employee training and advancement opportunities. Instead, Viterra will add to your workload and not pay you any additional compensation. It is only until you threaten to leave that Viterra will give you the raise that you deserve but only if your coworkers think your worth keeping around."

If you have any questions about bargaining, specific bargaining issues or about sharing your story reach out to your staff representative or anyone on your bargaining committee.

On Behalf of your Bargaining Committee,

Steve Torgerson
GSU staff representative

Your GSU bargaining committee members are Local 1 - Jim Brown (Balgonie), Wilfred Harris (Carnduff), Shannon Antonenko (Lloydminster), David Barrett (Gull Lake) and Travis Brewer (Saskatoon); Local 2 - Sheila Tran, Howard Wilson and Kaylee Kruger; assisted by GSU staff representatives Steve Torgerson and Mason Van Luven.

Local 1 & 2 (Viterra) members will be the first to hear about what is taking place at the bargaining table. Email updates will be issued before the information is released in our *Tuesday Members' Memo*.

Please share these updates with fellow GSU members who may not be on our bargaining update or Tuesday Members' Memo email lists, and encourage them to sign-up for updates by contacting their GSU Staff Representative or their Local representative.

More Information



If you are looking for past bargaining updates or any information provided to members it can be found on your bargaining page at gsu.ca or by clicking below.

**Past Bargaining
Updates Found Here**

Q: What is the CIRB?

A. The Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) is an independent, representational, quasi-judicial tribunal responsible for the interpretation and administration of Part I (Industrial Relations) and certain provisions of Part II (Occupational Health and Safety) and Part III (Labour Standards) of the Canada Labour Code.

The Board's mandate is to contribute to and promote a harmonious industrial relations climate in the federally regulated sector and contribute to health and safety and labour standards in the

workplace through the impartial,
effective and appropriate
administration of the rules of
conduct that govern employees,
labour and management.

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