

May 16, 2023 - No. 26

Windsor Salt Workers Continue to Hold the Line!
Windsor-Essex Community, Canadian and U.S. Salt Workers Step Up Expressions of Support



Windsor Salt picket line, May 11, 2023

- **More Strike-Breaking Schemes Come to Light**

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With the strike at Windsor Salt in its 13th week, people from the Windsor-Essex community continue to join the picket lines and salt workers from plants owned by the same U.S. firm, Stone Canyon Industries Holdings Inc., are openly standing with their comrades in Windsor.

Last week, more contingents of workers and community members from Windsor-Essex came out to spend time on the picket lines, sign the mural at the evaporation plant and take up the strike as their own. Delegations included active and retired workers from different sectors that come during the day in groups. They are joined by young workers who have started coming on their days off, or after work, to join the lines.



Billboard erected by salt miners in Pugwash, Nova Scotia, outside their facility supports striking workers in Windsor, Ontario.

In addition to the support from the Windsor-Essex labour movement, workers from Windsor-Essex are actively informing the entire labour movement about the significance of the salt workers' resistance. At the annual convention of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) held in Montreal from May 8-12, which brings together representatives of trade unions from across Canada, Mario Spagnuolo, President of the Windsor and District Labour Council and of the Greater Essex Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, informed delegates about the salt workers' fight and encouraged everyone to show their support. This is all the more significant given that Unifor, the union which represents the striking salt workers, does not officially participate in the CLC. Having a representative of Ontario elementary teachers, whose pension funds are invested in the strike-breaking activities of Stone Canyon Industries Holdings Inc., raise the strike as a matter of concern for the entire labour movement in Canada reflects the values Ontario teachers hold in high esteem.



Left: Retiree signs the mural at the picket line. Right: Mario Spagnuolo, President of the Windsor and District Labour Council and the Greater Essex Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario rises to speak about the salt workers' strike at the annual convention of the Canadian Labour Congress in Montreal May 8-12.

Salt miners in Pugwash, Nova Scotia with Unifor Local 823 have erected a large billboard outside of their facility that expresses their full support of workers in Windsor represented by Unifor Local 240 and 1959. The billboard is a clear indication that despite having been manipulated by Windsor Salt into accepting a contract in 2021, that they did not accept at first, the Pugwash workers are seeing that the stand being taken in Windsor upholds their dignity as well.

Similarly, workers from the U.S. who work in operations owned by Morton Salt, the parent company of Windsor Salt, are finding ways to show their support. Workers from Morton Salt's Ohio operations joined the workers on their picket lines and signed the mural.

On Friday May 12, the company indicated that it would come back to the negotiating table. It walked away on April 27, claiming it had to focus on finding culprits in an incident it insinuated the union was involved with, despite zero evidence. The workers are prepared to negotiate at any time but after two weeks of the company's refusal to negotiate they are not expecting much. During the break in negotiations, private investigators were sent to workers' homes by nobody knows who to collect information on the alleged incident and offer a \$50,000 reward for information. Despite such things, the company has made no headway in painting the union and workers as thugs. The company is now coming back to the negotiating table at a time the contract of the salt workers at the company's evaporation facility in Silver Springs, New York is set to expire on May 31. Yet to be seen is if the company will try to pit one set of workers against the other, the workers say. Or, some say, perhaps the company is in a hurry to send their union-busting lawyer to Silver Springs and settle with the Windsor Salt workers who are a thorn in their side. Whatever the case may be, the workers are ever ready to negotiate a contract which respects them and upholds their rights.

Contingents of Workers Bring Support to the Picket Lines





(EmpowerYourselfNow.ca. Photos: Unifor Local 240, EmpowerYourselfNow.ca.)



More Strike-Breaking Schemes Come to Light

Workers are leaning more about how Stone Canyon Industries Holdings Inc. operates to try to break unions. The information coming to light in the course of the strike struggle of Windsor Salt workers provides valuable insights for the whole trade union movement into how it must adapt to address the challenges it faces today.

A major problem that is coming up more and more is the use of co-packing to attack unionized workers by shifting production away from facilities where workers are unionized and on strike. Co-packing is an operation in which one plant packages products from another plant that may be owned by the same company, or another company which contracts out its packing. A famous example is the former Heinz plant in Leamington, Ontario. After Heinz was purchased by Warren Buffet's Berkshire Capital and another U.S. hedge fund in 2013, the company closed the plant in 2014. It was then reopened as a co-packing facility by Highbury Canco, which repackages Heinz products and other companies' products, while paying formerly-unionized Heinz workers \$9 less an hour to work in the same facility. In the case of Stone Canyon's salt cartel, it has been packaging

table salt from facilities in the U.S. using Windsor Salt boxes so that they can continue selling product to their customers while one section of their workers is on strike.

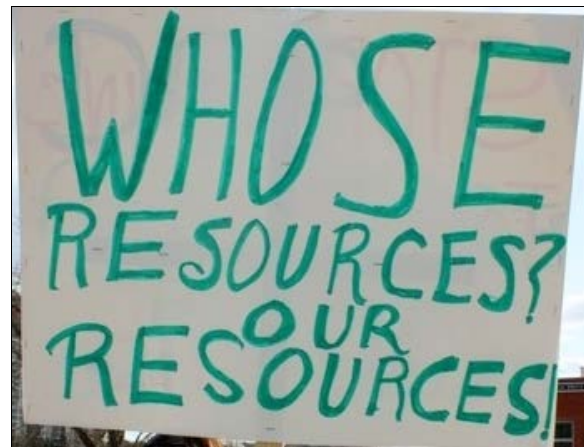


Striking salt workers picket Charron Transport, March 30, 2023. Company is strike-breaking by storing salt for Windsor Salt during the strike.

Workers know this is happening because boxes of Windsor Salt no longer say "Made in Canada" on them and have unfamiliar production source codes showing where they were packaged. It is possible that the salt is even taken from a Morton Salt evaporation plant, shipped to a third party to be co-packed and then shipped into Canada as if it comes from Windsor. The co-packaged salt is then stored at Charron Transport in Chatham for sale to Windsor Salt customers in Canada. They are transported by unionized truckers from a non-unionized storage facility. This is a new form of strike breaking activity that the trade union movement is coming to terms with in order to prevent it.

Stone Canyon has used other dirty tricks. In Pugwash, Nova Scotia, Stone Canyon had mountains of rock salt shipped in and dumped outside of the salt mine to show the workers that the company didn't need them to keep working. The message was that the workers could keep striking and it wouldn't make a difference next to a mountain of salt. To no avail, the Pugwash workers tried to convince the government to prevent the use of salt from outside Nova Scotia. Governments refused to defend the workers, always taking the stand that they do not intervene in private business affairs when in fact they intervene by permitting the company to legally break the strike.

Whether as a result of deliberate calculation or dumb luck, the second week of May it was revealed that Stone Canyon's salt operations in Windsor are strategically located as a source of sodium which may become important for the production of batteries. A subsidiary of Volkswagen is establishing battery production operations in St. Thomas, Ontario while another Volkswagen subsidiary is already producing sodium-based batteries in China. This has given the workers, and the labour movement,



something to think about as it means that salt may in fact be one of the critical minerals the U.S. is eyeing to take control over for its supply chains for electrification. Windsor Salt workers are in fact upholding a standard for all operations like these that the U.S. and its allies and rivals are seeking to control at the expense of the workers and their communities.

In this respect, the Windsor salt workers' resolve is strengthened by knowing they are fighting for all Canadians and for a Canadian standard of living as well as health and safety at work, which contracting out destroys. This is more clearly becoming a collective fight for the rights of Canadian workers to decide what happens with their natural resources and who they will benefit. Governments are providing the narrow private interests with huge government subsidies, handouts and tax write-offs at the expense of the well-being of the natural and social environments. The workers are fighting to humanize the natural and social environment by fighting for wages, working conditions and standards in a manner that protects and respects Mother Earth.

***Stand as One Against Union-busting in All Its Forms!
It Can Be Done! It Must Be Done!***



Pallets of salt stored in Charron Transport yard, April 2023.

(EmpowerYourselfNow.ca. Photos: Unifor Local 240, EmpowerYourselfNow.ca.)



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