

# NewsRelease



Public Service Alliance of Canada | Representing 160,000 workers

For immediate release

March 30, 2008

## Nunavut government employees vote for strike action

**Iqaluit**—Employees of the Nunavut Government voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action in their continuing struggle to achieve a reasonable collective agreement. The vote was held between March 3 to 30, 2008 among the Government's 2000 employees. Those workers are members of the Nunavut Employees Union (NEU), a Component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) who voted 90% in favour of giving a strike mandate to their union.

“This strong result in favour of strike action indicates clearly that our members are ready and willing to do what’s necessary to achieve a fair and equitable collective agreement,” said Doug Workman the President of the Nunavut Employees Union. “ This vote shows strong support for the PSAC/NEU negotiating team,” he added.

The collective agreement between the Government of Nunavut and the NEU expired in September 2006 and negotiations started in December 2006. The negotiations broke off in January 2008 and the Union had no choice but to apply for mediation because the Government has failed to present an offer that would achieve a negotiated settlement.

Jean-François Des Lauriers is the PSAC Regional Executive Vice-president for the North. He sees the mediation process that will begin soon as another opportunity for the government to address serious issues such as employee retention and a possible shortage of nurses and other health care professionals.

“The Government of Nunavut may be facing difficult problems, but shortchanging the employees at the bargaining table will not make the problems go away,” Des Lauriers said. “Time has come for the government to come up with solutions that will address the many difficulties workers encounter in the North.”

Major differences that forced the breakdown include the employer’s positions on the Northern Allowance, retroactivity on salary and benefits, recruitment and retention incentives, as well as operational issues for the Correctional, Health Care and School Year Workers.

The government must also present a new compensation package for the nurses if Nunavut is to avoid a nursing crisis. The current negotiations between the GN and the NEU will also determine the next collective agreement for other government employees such as college instructors, social workers, custodial workers, engineers and others.

The PSAC/NEU will soon publish a schedule of strike preparation courses that will take place throughout Nunavut during the next few weeks.

-30-

For information contact:

Alex Stuit, PSAC Regional Representative,  
Doug Workman, NEU President,  
Jean-François Des Lauriers, PSAC REVP

(867) 979-7430  
(867) 979-4209  
(867) 669-0991