



June 23, 2020

An Open Letter from Unifor Local 2025 to Chris Aylward, PSAC National President and Magali Picard PSAC National Executive Vice-President

Dear Chris and Magali,

The Local 2025 President wrote to you some weeks ago regarding issues raised by Racially Visible members of Unifor 2025. A meeting was convened with you both, Mandy Rocks, Gabriel Bergeron and Darlène Lozis on Monday, June 8. At this meeting it was communicated that more expedient action needed to take place for redress on the number of reports' recommendations that have not been implemented across PSAC.

In the aftermath of the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the suspicious death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet in Toronto, and the ongoing rightful protests across the world, the PSAC community must be vigilant in our actions to address anti-black and systemic racism. The long history of the systemic oppression and unequal treatment of Indigenous, Black, and Racialized people must end and PSAC can be a catalyst for change by initiating and implementing an action plan in consultation with Indigenous and Racially Visible staff.

We make it explicitly clear that this work should not fall solely on the shoulders of Indigenous and racially visible managers, staff, and elected officers. There must be measures of action and accountability by all in the Executive office and the Directors team to share the responsibilities equally. There should be minimal tolerance for any backlash or sentiments for "all lives matter" approaches. This is not the time or place for whitelash and we must be swift to take action against such rhetoric across the organization by public denouncing and addressing those individuals/groups in a meaningful way.

The time for that change within PSAC is now. More than ever, PSAC as an employer needs to demonstrate it is committed to considering its own record. It must take action to expose and remove racism and systemic barriers to equality from our workplaces. You recently declared your support in a statement to PSAC staff and, as an organization PSAC issued a statement to the membership. If

there is no dedicated and concrete action associated with those words, then nothing will change.

Attitudes and processes must change. We call on PSAC's leaders to commit themselves to action, otherwise their words of support for Black and Racialized staff are meaningless.

We call on PSAC to take the following actions.

- Recognize that PSAC, like many other institutions within this country (such as policing, education, mainstream media, health care) are being called to account. This is an opportunity to address longstanding systemic racism against Black and Indigenous people in all "their" diversity.
- While many organizations and businesses have issued statements in support of Black Lives Matter, the proof of this commitment will be in demonstrated actions and an implementation plan with key timelines and an accountability framework. We are not asking for people to take a knee unless there is a real commitment and implementation of action with it. The knee by the PM was a kind gesture but came without any formidable action or implementation plan, especially around policing.

There are systemic and oppressive issues inherent in our structure and those must be weeded out through a fully transparent examination of our historical and current practices. There have been numerous reports over the years, but the employer has been very slow to implement their recommendations or only in half-measure, thereby reinforcing systemic barriers.

It has become evident to many of our members and your executive that there are systemic issues at play in the Human Resources section, beginning with a complete lack of transparency regarding staffing. We understand that committees have been struck for recruitment, hiring and retention with the management team participating on these committees. This work must be properly resourced and given priority. We also believe that there must be consultations with each of the bargaining units to share information and concerns. Human Resources is at the centre of all hiring done for the organization and if there are problems there it will permeate the entire organization. Our staffing must be visionary and include those that have been historically marginalized.

We can no longer simply react to incidents of racism without changing attitudes and eliminating systemic barriers. Although an organizational review has been initiated, it has been made clear that an equity lens was never applied in conducting this review. If systemic change is to occur, an equity lens must be applied to ensure a complete cultural and systemic shift.

As you invoked the revolutionary Angela Davis in your June 1st statement to PSAC staff - "In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist".

Part of that is challenging and eradicating white supremacy and its vestiges from our structures, practices and policies. Each of us has a responsibility to reflect on that and dedicate ourselves to it. We ask no less from our employer.

We are proud to work with and for PSAC members. But there is no place for racism and discrimination in our workplaces. We demand accountability for Directors, Management and Elected Officers that are not champions for equity, but obstacles. Our local is committed to working with the elected leadership and management team to ensure we are all working in a transparent manner to ensure transformative organizational change within PSAC that advances systemic equity and the greater good.

We look forward to seeing an accelerated timeline to put words into action.

In solidarity,

The Local 2025 executive