



## ***SAFETY IS THE NUMBER ONE REASON WORKERS ARE ON STRIKE AT HYDRO OTTAWA***

Thank you for taking a moment to read this bulletin. We hope that this information will help clarify the reasons why this labour dispute between the workers represented by IBEW Local 636 and Hydro Ottawa is happening.

A strike is the absolute last resort for workers, and only occurs when every reasonable effort to negotiate an agreement that recognizes the dignity and worth of all employees has failed.

The union and its members understand that the last few years have been difficult for Ottawa residents and businesses. The workers that have been on the front line restoring power during every major weather and power outage event are now asking for your help and support.

### **Here are the top reasons why the employees of Hydro Ottawa are striking:**

**Safety is number one.** In 2022, IBEW Local 636, on behalf of its members, reported several safety violations committed by Hydro Ottawa to the Ministry of Labour. Unfortunately, hydro workers know all too well that failure to comply with strict industry requirements and safety standards could result in serious injury or loss of life. Shockingly, despite these reports, safety issues have continued to occur. To date, employees have failed to receive satisfactory acknowledgement or action, which has directly impacted their job performance and mental health. If employees do not trust the company to do the right thing, how can they trust the company to keep them safe?

**Health and benefits.** By ensuring that employees have access to updated health and paramedical insurance benefits, workers can perform at their physical and mental best while on the job. This is particularly vital for those that conduct dangerous work in the field. In addition to issues with the company refusing to supply some staple protective gear and clothing that workers have asked for, the company has challenged adequate rest periods for shift workers (even those working during a crisis) which directly puts everyone's well-being in jeopardy. In order for employees to carry out their duties safely and effectively, the company must mitigate potential health hazards and prioritize safety now. Some benefits haven't increased in decades.

**Fair compensation.** For many years, Hydro Ottawa has unfairly frozen wages for some employees, and actively worked to suppress and minimize fair compensation for its workers; resulting in numerous grievances against the company. Meanwhile, every year, Hydro Ottawa pays tens of millions of dollars in dividends, while the CEO and executive management team enjoy lavish salaries and bonuses.

Now more than ever before, the success of Hydro Ottawa rests with the workers who are directly responsible for the delivery of safe and reliable electricity. Whether it is maintaining the city's power grid, restoring power during storms and outages, or administering all the services that Hydro Ottawa provides to keep the lights on, the frontline staff plays a key role in meeting the needs of the city and its residents every single day and night, no matter the weather.

On behalf of IBEW Local 636 and its members, we thank you for your understanding and support during this most difficult time. We desperately want to get back to work - but it must be safe, healthy and fair.

**If you would like to express your concern for the safety of Hydro Ottawa employees, please consider contacting the Mayor or your local City Councillor. You can find their contact information at [www.ottawa.ca/en/city-hall](http://www.ottawa.ca/en/city-hall) and clicking on Mayor and City Councillors.**