

Aluminum Tariffs Lifted

Today it was announced that the aluminum and steel tariffs imposed by the US government will be removed. Approximately one year ago the Trump administration levied tariffs on our industry, in what seemed to be a means to renegotiate the NAFTA agreement. Commitments were made that once the new trade agreement was reached between our countries the tariffs would be removed.

After there was a tentative agreement on the new NAFTA and as soon as those commitments appeared to be nothing more than words, our Union sprang into action. We engaged our National Union, who organized a number of strategy sessions between our sister Locals in Quebec and us. The National supported our efforts by organizing a meeting with the provincial government, which led to a great lobby in Ottawa. In Ottawa we had the opportunity to have six Executive members participate in over 60 meetings in three days. This was our opportunity to educate the government on how important our aluminum industry is to Canada and that the government shouldn't finalize any trade deals until the tariffs are removed.

Not long after Ottawa, we flew to Washington DC, where we partnered with key leaders in the aluminum industry, including Rio Tinto, and in a coordinated effort we met with everyone with influence and skin in the game that would listen to us to explain how important the aluminum industry is to both our countries. Our message was clear, we don't want tariffs and we don't want quotas.

As you can expect, complicated issues between countries such as these don't get resolved overnight, so after a lull in the action our National Union sent us back to see our Premier, John Horgan, in March of this year, where we had good frank discussions and he reiterated his support for us and committed to do everything that he could.

Basically, we were part of a large concerted effort that a lot of people and organizations played a part in. Our Premier, John Horgan showed tremendous support for us. We applaud the federal government for standing strong and keeping their word that they wouldn't finalize the new NAFTA agreement without the tariffs being removed. We can't forget the support that our MP, Nathan Cullen, showed us throughout this crisis.

We can't thank our National Union and especially our National President, Jerry Dias, enough. They used all of their connections at all levels of government and industry to support us.

As often as we are at odds with the Company, we were able to put aside our differences and work together to help save our industry. Hopefully, we can build on this and continue to work together to repair our relationship and resolve all of our outstanding issues.

Opening up the US market will give our smelter an economic advantage to prosper in the future, which will give our Membership an economic advantage at the bargaining table.

None of this is possible without the support of you, our Membership!

Your Union at work!