



A Message from NEU President William (Bill) Fennell for Government of Nunavut Members



On a daily basis, NEU offices receive emails or calls from our Government of Nunavut (GN) Staff Members asking what is going on with the GN Collective Agreement that expired in September 2018.

As much as I hate to say this, the simple and brutally honest answer is that we are completely stalled.

As I write this, I am aware that the GN is dealing with the latest COVID-19 outbreak (as of now in Iqaluit and Kinngait) and I had to ask myself “is now the time to call-out the GN on their dishonest and disrespectful approach to Collective Bargaining?” The answer is yes. Our impacted Members deserve to know the truth and why we are in this current and unacceptable situation.

The Nunavut Employees Union (NEU) will continue to support GN efforts to combat COVID-19 and protect the health of Nunavut and all who live and work here. *At the same time, I also need to ask “why is the GN turning its back on all the GN workers that are trying to protect our great Territory?”*

It would be easy and convenient to blame COVID-19 for the delayed Bargaining. The truth is that it is not COVID-19 that has caused this delay. It is the simple fact that the GN has not made any meaningful effort to try to reach an agreement. The last straw was the GN’s recent rejection of our recommendation to go to Binding Arbitration. This clearly demonstrated the GN’s complete lack of commitment to resolving this situation.

The GN has failed to deal with this in a professional manner since the first mention of wages in Bargaining. This is called “Bad Faith Bargaining” and is the basis and reason for the [Claim we were forced to file against the GN](#). (This claim is unfortunately stuck in the Nunavut Court system). Consistently the GN has offered things that benefit one main group of GN Members while clearly ignoring the needs of other Members. For example, giving Members in one region a big increase in Northern Allowance while most of the other regions get nothing or even a decreased allowance.

That is unacceptable and an insult to each and every GN Unionized employee. Every Member that pays union dues has the right to a fair and equitable Collective Agreement. Collective Agreements state and define pay levels, types of leaves and other important workplace issues. Most of all, Collective Agreements are your bill of rights as an employee.

While we wait for the Nunavut Court of Justice to rule on our Bad Faith Bargaining Claim, I am asking Members to call/write/email their [Members of the Legislative Assembly \(MLAs\)](#) and say “We want the GN back to the table and to Bargain in Good Faith”.

Members continue their dedication and hard work despite the fact that the GN is not meeting their responsibility to work towards a new and fair Collective Agreement.

I ask you to contact your local MLA so that we can get past this delay caused by the GN. If GN won’t do the right thing and Bargain in Good Faith, then it is time for the MLAs to do the right thing for the GN employees.

Stay Safe and follow the Public Health Precautions no matter where in Nunavut you live.

In solidarity

William (Bill) Fennell President – Nunavut Employees Union