



For immediate release

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CUPE Local 998 ratifies agreement with Hydro Union vows to fight job cuts announced today

WINNIPEG - CUPE Local 998 members have just ratified a four-year agreement with Manitoba Hydro, but are calling for further discussion with the crown corporation to avoid layoffs.

"We reached an agreement after tough discussions," said Chris Mravinec, President of Local 998, representing 1,100 clerical and technical employees at Hydro. "Now that Hydro has announced drastic job cuts, it's not too late to find a better way."

The agreement included modest wage increases and negotiations included disclosures from Hydro that significant job cuts were coming. The union negotiated protections for members whose jobs might be eliminated, but Hydro's position on cutting jobs was not up for debate.

"We are not satisfied that all steps have been taken by Hydro to protect the energy services we all rely on, and to protect the workers who provide them," added Mravinec. "CUPE Local 998 members have already made sacrifices on wages and through recent job losses – today's announcement goes too far."

CUPE is concerned that Hydro's move contradicts Premier Pallister's commitment to protect public services and public service workers.

"These are good jobs that provide our members and their families a decent living and help drive the Manitoba economy," said Mravinec. "CUPE 998 will fight to keep these jobs. We expect Hydro to sit down with us to examine its financial position more closely and seek alternatives to these drastic job cuts."

CUPE 998 warns against job cuts as a way to trim Hydro's budget. The planned carve-out of the Power Smart energy efficiency program, for example, might take employees off payroll, but would cost more to deliver that way.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees is Canada's largest union, representing more than a half-million members. In Manitoba, CUPE represents approximately 26,000 members working in health care facilities, personal care homes, school divisions, municipal services, social services, child care centres, public utilities, libraries and family emergency services.

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