**REPORT OF THE HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**OF THE PSAC ATLANTIC COUNCIL**

**CONFERENCE CALL**

**FEBRUARY 12, 2018**

**PRESENT:** Les Smith **REGRETS**: Jill Power

John Ivany

Terry Sacrey

Chris Di Liberatore

Brian Oldford, Chairperson

Colleen Coffey, REVP – Atlantic

Nancy MacLean, Staff Advisor

1. **Welcome**

Brother Oldford welcomed the committee members and thanked them for the work they will be doing to promote health and safety in the Atlantic Region. This is the first committee meeting since the PSAC Atlantic Regional Convention held in June, 2017.

1. **3 – Year Mandate and Plan**

A copy of the 3 – Year Mandate and Plan for the Health & Safety Committee of the Atlantic Council was reviewed. A copy of the revised document will be posted on the Atlantic website.

1. **Education**

The committee discussed the health & Safety training that has taken place in the Atlantic Region in the last two years as part of the basic education program. Most of, if not all of, the training has been done in Nova Scotia. This issue was discussed during the Atlantic caucus held at the PSAC National Health & Safety conference in the fall, 2016. There is a need to provide training to PSAC members. Sister MacLean has been contracted by several Federal Government Departments to conduct training on Regulation XX: Violence Prevention in the Workplace and Introduction to the Canada Labour Code Part II. Sister MacLean has delivered such training to the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Health Canada and the Department of National Defense.

The committee recommends to the Atlantic Council Education Committee that health & Safety training be part of the basic weekend program in each Atlantic province. Sister Coffey also confirmed that health & safety training will be part of the curriculum at the Atlantic Union School.

1. **Asbestos Regulations**

On January 6, 2018, the proposed ***Prohibition of Asbestos and Asbestos Products Regulations*** and the proposed ***Regulations Amending the Export of Substances on the Export Control List Regulations*** were published in the Canada Gazette, Part I, for a 75 – day public comment period ending on March 22, 2018.

While the proposed *Prohibition of Asbestos and Asbestos Productions Regulations* would prohibit the import, sale and use of asbestos, as well as the manufacture, import, sale and use of products containing asbestos, there are some exceptions to the “band” and there is no asbestos registry.

As is always, the case, comments and information received by the government during the public comment period will be considered in the development of the final regulations, targeted for publication in the fall of 2018.

1. **Bill C-65: Harassment and Violence in Federal Workplaces**

As a result of the courage actions of several women who came forward about the sexual harassment they faced by some Federal and Provincial politicians; the Liberal Government introduced Bill C-65 in the House of Commons in January, 2018. The government is finally recognizing the rights of women to work in harassment, including sexually harassment, and violence free workplaces. Bill C-65 will make amendments to the Canada Labour Code Part II. Overall, the Bill is positive, particularly in providing occupational health and safety protections.

The PSAC will be making a formal written submission to Parliament and will be presenting in person to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Sills and Social Development on February 22, 2018. The Liberal government is currently fast-tracking the bill and so it will move quickly from first reading through third and the Bill is currently at the committee stage. The PSAC will make recommendations that deal with the following:

* Role of the Workplace and Policy Health and Safety Committees. We need to better define the role these committees.
* Ensure the complainant receives a summary report (Regardless of the action, if the complainant does not receive a summary report, the complainant is prone to feeling that the complaint either fell on deaf ears, or that no meaningful action was taken.
* Hire and retain a sufficient number of Health & Safety Officers and establish a substantive training system for the special investigations. We need enforcement officers who can do this work.

1. **Task Force on Mental Health**

On January 15, 2018, the Joint Task Force on Mental Health released their third report entitled, ***Building Success: Guide to Establishing and Maintaining Psychological Health and Safety Management System in the Federal Public Service.*** The Joint Task Force focuses on measures to improve mental health in federal workplaces and the Guide has been developed to help organizations plan, develop. Maintain and refresh their organization’s Psychological Health and Safety Management System. The Guide provides a step-by-step roadmap that will help organizations identify and assess workplace hazards that can affect the psychological health and safety of employees.

1. **Regional and National Health & Safety Conferences**

Regional and National Health & Safety Conferences are scheduled to take place within the 3 – year budget cycle. The next cycle will operate from 2019 – 2022. Dates for these conferences have not yet been announced. Brother Ivany is co-chair of the Atlantic Council Environment Committee and indicated that the committee will be making a recommendation to have a 1 - day environment forum to be held directly following the Atlantic Health & Safety Conference. Additional details will be announced when the planning for these events commence.

1. **Appointment of Denis St. Jean to the Board of CCOHS**

The Public Service Alliance of Canada is pleased to announced that Brother Denis St. Jean has been appointed as a governor representing workers to the Canadian Centre of Occupational Health & Safety. Denis is the National Health & Safety Officer with the PSAC who has over 25 years of health and safety activism and experience. Denis has represented the rights of PSAC members through his political actions and has provided representation at various administrative tribunals. The Atlantic Council Health & Safety Committee would like to congratulate Br. St. Jean on this appointment.

1. **Roundtable**

A roundtable was held providing the committee members with an opportunity to share any thoughts or to seek clarification. The committee recognized that given the depth of discussion it is preferable to hold face to face meetings.

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of the Committee

Brian Oldford, Chairperson

Atlantic Council Health & Safety Committee