

Good afternoon Mayor Fougere and City Councillors,

My name is Nic Skulski and I am here representing myself speaking as a citizen concerned about the Co-op Refinery lockout.

This lockout is severely affecting the community as it means that nearly 800 people in the city are out of work. There's approximately 100,000 homes in Regina. That means that nearly 1% of households in Regina are without a source of steady income. This has detriments to all the businesses in Regina as none of those workers are spending money in the community. This includes me not spending money while trying to plan for the birth of my first child. It's heartbreaking for me not being able to provide what I want for her or enjoy what is supposed to be a happy time in my life.

The safety of the community is put at risk by allowing under-trained and overtired employees to operate a facility with the potential to harm many. The minimum a supervisor has been working is 3 days 3 nights 3 off 12 hour shifts or 72 hours every 9 days (This is equivalent to working 8 hours a day every day with none off). There is many working more hours than this and with them being locked in due to Covid concerns they will likely go to the 13 on and 1 off schedule we often work. This has been ongoing for over 100 days and will be undoubtedly wearing people down. I know and have worked with many of the people in there. They're good people and don't deserve to be stuck in that situation with the fear of losing their job if they speak out.

The entire maintenance force that knows the equipment best has been locked out and now they will be putting off doing a shutdown that is usually planned to fix the equipment. These shutdowns have already been extended for many units from 3 to 4 years between maintenance. This work has been additionally and unfairly dumped onto inexperienced workers, many of whom had never been in the plant prior. As every piece of equipment continues to deteriorate this will only aggravate an already overtaxed system.

Just days before the camp was occupied there were still significant concerns from a city engineer about fire safety. Then with little to no reasoning why, they approved it for occupancy as it was being filled up. I've lived in these types of camps before in Fort McMurray. On the fire crew in Fort Mac the plans for us during a fire in the camps was only to try and contain it and not even bother trying to fight it. They burn notoriously fast and the fact that people I know could be locked in there while Co-op chose to ignore fire concerns makes me sick. They can claim what they want but there is no way these camps can be acceptable during an outbreak such as this. If somebody in camp has something, everybody has it.

I realize that the Refinery accounts for around 1 % of the taxable revenue in the city and always tops the the Major Taxpayers charts in the financial statements. Does this mean that they have the right to do whatever they want in your city to your residents? Is that why you give them the leeway to build whatever they want?

I call on you to stand up for what is right. I'm not sure if people were complacent in what happened or worse. But I'm asking you to fix that now. Many great things have come from this city and now I ask you to set that example once again. I ask that you explore bylaws to prevent temporary worker camps from ever being built in Regina again. Look at options to ensure that corporations can't turn to untrained, unskilled out of province replacement labor and wrestle control from the citizens of this town again. Extend it to whatever degree you can. Hotels, home rentals or a city-wide ban. You can act now to preserve the future of the city or be known as the people who stood idly by and let it crumble.