

Standing in Solidarity: Wildfire Crisis Impacting Our Members and the Syilx Nation

CUPE Local 5523 members, family and friends,

Our region is facing an incredibly challenging crisis as aggressive wildfires sweep through our communities. As members of CUPE Local 5523, we live, work, and learn on the unceded, ancestral territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation. Today, those very lands, neighboring communities, and families across Vernon, Lumby, and Cherryville are bearing the heavy weight of evacuations, displacement, and loss.

As education workers and trade unionists, solidarity means showing up when our community hurts the most.

We extend our deepest concern and love to all members, students, and Syilx neighbors who have been forced to flee their homes or are under evacuation alerts.

The Union extends our deepest thanks to the firefighters, emergency personnel, and frontline public service workers—including our own CUPE members—working around the clock to protect lives and infrastructure.

Please check on and reach out to fellow SD22 members. If you know a colleague or school family displaced by the fires, offer whatever practical support or shelter you safely can.

Please prioritize your health. Keep up to date with official regional updates and consult the union or your Joint Health and Safety Committee if you face unsafe air quality or working conditions due to smoke or fire activity.

We will navigate this difficult season by leaning into our core values of community care, mutual respect, and absolute unity.

If you or your family require direct union support or have been evacuated, or just want to talk, please do not hesitate to contact myself at 250-306-2350 or by email to president@cupe5523.ca

In strong solidarity,
Michelle Skillnik
President, CUPE Local 5523