

November 17, 2011

**To:** All OPSEU members in the Ontario Public Service

**From:** Warren (Smokey) Thomas  
President, Ontario Public Service Employees Union

Roxanne Barnes  
Chair, OPSEU Central Contract Enforcement and Renewal Committee

**Subject:** More layoffs in the Ontario Public Service

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Today in workplaces across the province, 231 OPSEU members were called into meetings with their managers and union stewards and told what must be the worse news you can get on the job.

They were told their positions are being eliminated and they are being laid off. They received a pre-notice of surplus today and will get a surplus notice on December 2. These 231 OPSEU members are in addition to the 417 OPSEU members who received surplus notices earlier this year.

Has the work these members have been doing on behalf of the people of Ontario suddenly disappeared? Has the need for the services they provide dried up?

The answer is an emphatic **no**. The ministries are cutting positions in order to meet an arbitrary government target to reduce the OPS by five per cent by next March and seven per cent by 2014.

There is no credible rationale as to why 3,400 jobs should be cut by next March and another 1,500 jobs eliminated by March, 2014.

**Not that we trust their numbers.**

The employer won't tell us how many jobs have been cut from non-OPSEU groups in the OPS. We think OPSEU members are taking the majority of job cuts even though our numbers have shrunk by over 20,000 in the past 15 years. Meanwhile, the number of middle managers and policy people, (represented by AMAPCEO), has increased by 140 per cent.

Not only that, the employer has told us they don't even know whether they've met their five per cent target because they've added 2,000 positions to the OPS in the meantime. The employer implies there could be more layoffs to offset the positions they added. This is outrageous.

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On the one hand, the employer has laid off 25-year employees, many of them in the office administration category. And on the other hand, they've hired managers, policy people, and executives who earn two to three times what our members make!

So, how exactly, is the government saving any money here? And why is all the sacrifice expected to come from front-line employees and employees supporting the front line, many of them lower-paid, female-dominated positions?

We see no evidence from this employer that the pain is being shared.

The employer also won't tell us how many vacant positions have been cut. This is obviously important information to have. Slashing vacancies means that surplus employees have fewer jobs to redeploy into.

It's also important to know because the government is cutting vacant positions at a time when 600,000 Ontarians are looking for work.

The employer's arbitrary, disrespectful and secretive approach to the layoffs does not end there. The employer is treating members who have received surplus notices and opted to stay in the OPS shamefully. The employer is refusing to uphold our members' job security rights unless forced to through the filing of grievances. The employer is not matching our members to permanent vacancies or temporary assignments as required by Article 20 of your collective agreement.

### **Your union is fighting back.**

- 1) Every one of the 231 pre-surplus notices handed out today will be grieved. Our staff representatives will work with LECs and surplus members to ensure individual grievances are filed, grieving improper surplus. Your staff representative has the sample grievance language.
- 2) We have advised our Local Presidents, and we advise all surplus members, to file grievances when:
  - a. you are not assigned to a permanent vacancy, as per Article 20.3;
  - b. you are not assigned to a temporary vacancy, as per Article 20.8; and
  - c. you have not been assigned a displacement opportunity, as per Article 20.4.

Again, your staff representative has the sample grievance language. We advise members to strictly follow grievance timelines and to ensure all communication with the employer about the grievances is in writing.

- 3) Obviously, our preference is for surplus members to redeploy into vacant positions. We know that ministries hide vacancies from the Ministry of Government Services, Centre for Employee Services, particularly those with a duration of less than six months. We ask that you report vacant positions in the OPSEU bargaining unit to your Ministry Enforcement and Renewal Committee. Go to this link for contact info  
<http://www.opseu.org/ops/merc/mercindex.htm>

The good news is that when members file grievances, the employer usually acts quickly to redress the situation.

If you have questions about the pre-notice of surplus, please consult our Q & A  
[http://www.opseu.org/ops/collective/article\\_20\\_q\\_a\\_july\\_2011.pdf](http://www.opseu.org/ops/collective/article_20_q_a_july_2011.pdf)

OPSEU will continue to publicly fight these and any additional OPS job cuts. Our message is simple, and clear – **Cuts Hurt Us All**. We will expose to the public that every OPS job cut will result in service loss, either through a direct front-line service job or jobs that support front-line services.

The McGuinty government believes they can keep the public in the dark until services are either gone or severely impacted. With your help, we will show Ontarians the value of the vital services you provide, and why they can't afford to lose them.

In solidarity,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas  
President



Roxanne Barnes  
CERC Chair