

Resolution on Harborlite-Imerys

Turkey, 4 November, 2009

The ICEM World Materials Conference in Izmir, Turkey, received a report from John Lewis, the coordinator of NA Imerys Network, on the on-going case at the Imerys subsidiary in USA:

Imerys:

In 2005, Imerys, a French industrial minerals and pigment company, acquired Harborlite Corporation and its parent company World Minerals, Inc. which is headquartered in Santa Barbara, California, USA.

- The National Labor Relations Board has issued several complaints against Imerys in recent years alleging that it engaged in numerous unfair labor practices. Examples include its facilities in Sylacauga, Alabama and Dry Branch, Georgia, where management illegally advised employees to abandon their union and promised benefits to employees if they would do so; threatened a union steward who requested information from management on behalf of an employee; threatened employees if they made complaints under the grievance procedure; failed to abide by the terms of a grievance settlement with the union; and threatened retaliation (and subsequently actually retaliated) against employees when the union responded to complaints.

Case of Harborlite-Imerys, Teamsters

- Harborlite operates a highly efficient and profitable open pit Perlite mine, twenty-five miles south of Antonito. Perlite is a mineral used to manufacture various construction materials such as wallboard and joint compound.
- There are 29 workers at the Harborlite mine and processing facility in Antonito, Colorado.
- Workers at the Harborlite mine have been represented by the Teamsters Union for more than 40 years. Despite agreeing to substantial concessions, management locked the workers out from their jobs on October 7, 2009. The company is taking advantage of the economic downturn to demand steep reductions to health care coverage, the pension plan, overtime provisions, a wage freeze, and major work rule changes. Currently, Harborlite Corporation and its parent company refuse to bargain collectively with union representatives and intend to permanently replace the workers.
- Many of these Antonito miners have worked the mine for 25-30 years and they don't understand why the French conglomerate would throw them out after lifetimes of productive service.

The ICEM Materials Industries Conference, joined by 118 delegates from 31 countries, resolves to:

- **Deplore the unacceptable lock-out, and the exploiting of the current economic recession.**
- **Demand Imerys USA to stop the unfair labour practice immediately.**
- **Send a strong message of solidarity to members of the Teamsters at Harborlite.**
- **Pledge to mobilize global action, if workers are replaced.**
- **Work with French affiliates to protest against unfair labour practices.**