

March 3, 2016

Cliffs Persists in Demanding Deep Cuts to Benefits, Pensions

(March 3) – We entered bargaining with Cliffs Natural Resources six months ago, hopeful that the company would be reasonable and willing to work with us to solve our shared problems.

Unfortunately, this week Cliffs instead has continued to demand deep concessions that would harm both active employees and their families, as well as retirees who have worked hard their whole lives.

We know this is an extremely difficult time for our entire industry. That's why, since we began bargaining last September, we have attempted to address the company's needs while still trying to achieve a contract that would be fair to us and to our families. The ideas that we have presented to the company have been a sincere attempt to meet those goals.

Instead of taking our ideas seriously, the company is sticking to its unrealistic demands.

"Since day one, our goal has been to negotiate a fair contract," said District 11 Director Emil Ramirez. "But we must not allow the company to use this crisis as an excuse to gut benefits that people have worked their whole lives to achieve."

(OVER)

Cliffs has made proposals that would weaken our pension plan, allow the company to avoid upcoming pension obligations, eliminate safety incentives to save a few dollars, and limit our ability to protect our jobs and our industry from harmful legislation.

In addition, besides seeking to increase costs and reduce pay and benefits for active employees, Cliffs is demanding more money out of the pockets of our retirees and surviving spouses. In many cases, the premiums that the company is demanding for health care exceed the pensions that retirees and surviving spouses receive.

This is unacceptable. Throughout the bargaining process, we have made proposals that would save the company a substantial amount of money, while still maintaining affordable premiums and quality health care.

For six months we have offered fair and reasonable alternatives to this company, which they continue to reject in favor of reckless demands for concessions.

This fight is far from over. We thank you all for your strength and solidarity so far. We ask that you continue to stand behind us and continue to stay in touch with your local leaders and your CAT Teams for more updates as we keep fighting for a fair agreement.

USW Local 2705—Hibbing Taconite	USW Local 6860—United Taconite
USW Local 4974—Tilden Mining	USW Local 4950—Empire Mining



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