

May 11, 2011

To: **All OPS Members**

From: Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President, Ontario Public Service Employees Union
Roxanne Barnes, Chair, OPSEU Central Enforcement and Renewal Committee (CERC)

Subject: Job cuts in the Ontario Public Service

On Thursday, May 12, the employer will disclose to the bargaining agents their plans for the fiscal year. This comes as a result of decisions revealed in the most recent Ontario budget. The bargaining agents (including OPSEU) are bound by confidentiality in this disclosure, which is usually vague but does give us a sense of direction as to what the employer's plans are.

What we do know is that over the past few years the government had announced the downsizing of the OPS by 3,500 jobs. This was to be accomplished through attrition. Prior to the budget announcement, the government had managed to eliminate 2,100 of those positions.

In the budget, the government announced it would eliminate 1,500 more positions from the OPS beginning in April 2012. These cuts will NOT be by attrition, and will be eliminated by lay-off or voluntary exit. Add those to the 1,400 jobs still remaining to be eliminated, and that totals 2,900 OPS members who will be out of work.

This is totally unacceptable from a government that has made promises to fund and support quality public services in this province. The Premier, in a desperate move to appeal to right-wing voters in Ontario, has targeted the OPS as a way to cut spending and reduce the deficit. Time and time again, we have watched governments gut public services to the detriment of the workers and the public that we serve. This is misguided, ineffective and harmful to people and communities across the province.

Unfortunately, the news gets even worse. The McGuinty government has now created the Drummond Commission to review all services delivered by the province. Headed by an ex-banker who specializes in privatization, this Commission will look at EVERY Ministry with an eye to privatize services and eliminate OPS jobs.

How does this affect you? Many of you are already feeling the pressures of reduced staffing in your workplaces. You are being told to do more with less. Many are doing work on their own time just to keep up. At the same time that OPSEU-represented front-line workers are being eliminated, the employer is creating hundreds of new supervisory positions and hiring consultants.

Also, don't forget your pension plan could also be at risk. As job cuts continue, fewer members will be contributing to the OPS pension plan. That could mean increased contributions or reduction in pension benefits in the future.

Our message to you is clear, and direct. **NO member in the OPS is safe in their job.** We don't know what jobs will be eliminated, or even if the government will try to merge different ministries. What we do know is that we are **ALL** under attack, and we must now stand together and fight to protect our jobs and the services we deliver.

What is OPSEU doing? At the 2011 Convention, the members gave clear direction to the union that they wanted a full fight-back campaign against downsizing and job cuts in the OPS. This campaign includes an assessment of all government initiatives towards privatization and contracting out of public service work, member education and mobilizing meetings, and building a province-wide reporting

network to monitor and police employer actions in the workplace. Many of the pieces of this campaign are already in place, and will become fully operational in the weeks ahead.

What can you do? The CERC is asking every member to report to your local executive information you receive in the workplace in any of the following areas:

- Information about possible or actual job cuts or downsizing in your work area
- News of any consultants being hired
- Any new supervisory or administrative jobs being created that are represented by the Association of Management, Administrative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario (AMAPCEO)

Local executive members are then being directed to report this information directly to their elected Ministry Enforcement and Renewal Committees (MERCs) who will notify the CERC Team. With that knowledge, we can then take the battle direct to the government and expose their ill-conceived plans.

Once again, we are in a battle to defend and preserve quality public services in this province. OPSEU cannot do this alone. We need every member of the OPS to stand up and let the government know that we are the cornerstone of what makes Ontario a great province to live in. Together, we will send the message that OPSEU OPS members are unparalleled in the work they do, and it's time to stop tearing down the public services just to appease conservative voters.

Thank you for your continued support.

In Solidarity,

Warren (Smokey) Thomas

President

Roxanne Barnes

CERC Chair