



*Public Service Alliance of Canada  
Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada*



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**MEDIA RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

## **PSAC members at Ekati diamond mine vote to ratify tentative agreement with Ekati owner BHP Billiton; strike that began April 7 ends with first-ever union contract at a Canadian diamond mine and significant improvements for workers**

**Yellowknife** – Public Service Alliance of Canada members at the Ekati diamond mine have voted to ratify a tentative agreement with Ekati owner BHP Billiton, ending a strike that began April 7 with the first-ever union contract at a Canadian diamond mine and significant improvements for workers there.

Ekati workers voted 66% in favour of the one-year contract that contains a full grievance procedure to protect workers from arbitrary and unfair treatment, wage increases, a signing benefit, more vacation days and other improvements, said Jean-François Des Lauriers, PSAC Executive Vice-President-North.

“This has been a tough strike but our members are going back to work with significant improvements in their workplace as a result of their determination,” Des Lauriers said. “And we will be back at the bargaining table on our members’ behalf next year.”

Todd Parsons, President of the Union of Northern Workers component of PSAC, which represents Diamond Workers UNW Local X3050, said the vote results indicate it was a difficult decision for members to go back to work.

“Ekati workers clearly had hoped to achieve more in this round of bargaining but facing a multinational employer who makes \$7.5 billion in annual profits and just getting a first contract with the terms and conditions we won is quite an accomplishment,” Parsons said. “Our union is now in place and we can build on this success in the next round of negotiations.”

Parsons said PSAC’s Dirty Diamonds campaign urging an international boycott of Ekati-produced Aurias™ and CanadaMark™ diamonds is now over and the union will instead encourage consumers to buy union-produced diamonds.

The tentative agreement announced June 23 was reached with the assistance and direction of the Canada Industrial Relations Board.

Ekati is Canada’s first diamond mine. It produces 6 per cent of the world’s diamond supply by value or 4 per cent by weight and yields 3 to 5 million carats annually. It is located 300 km northeast of Yellowknife and 200 km south of the Arctic Circle.

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