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**Labour Relations Board's interim changes miss the mark
An independent and comprehensive review is urgently needed**

Paradise – NL Carpenters Union, Local 579 says the Labour Relations Board's interim changes in practices and procedures will not restore worker trust and faith in the Board. An independent and comprehensive review is urgently needed to address many of the significant problems within the Board and with the legislation.

In the wake of a serious breach of privacy by the Labour Relations Board that occurred on August 14, 2020, the Board unilaterally sent labour leaders a notice containing changes to its practices and procedures concerning the receipt, retention and use of confidential union membership information. For instance, the Board announced that it is no longer accepting electronic filing of information and will only accept information in physical paper format, which will be stored in a secure location within the Board's offices.

Mike Williams, President of NL Carpenters Union, Local 579, says the Board's management of confidential employee information is antiquated and the Board's new procedures are also antiquated. "It is 2020 and time for the Board to develop up to date online platforms to facilitate procedures and processes to securely manage confidential information," he said. "If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that there are new ways of doing business online, surely the Labour Relations Board should not be permitted to go backwards."

Mr. Williams suggests that the Board consult with stakeholders, the provincial government's Office of the Chief Information Officer, or private information technology companies, to determine how best to improve the secure electronic management of its information.

Mr. Williams is concerned that the Board is treating this issue as a one-off occurrence when it is really a consequence of many significant issues that extend well beyond confidentiality of union membership information.

"The understaffed and underfunded Board has stated that over the coming months it will be conducting a narrow review. We believe that Board is not the appropriate agency to review itself." Williams said. "There is an urgent need for an independent review of this Board and labour relations legislation. We are calling on the provincial government to initiate a comprehensive review immediately."

The Information and Privacy Commissioner's Office is also investigating the breach of privacy incident and its review and recommendations will help inform the broader independent review. "Workers and their families must trust that the Labour Relations Board operates fairly and impartially. The provincial government must acknowledge this and act immediately to restore trust," Mr. Williams said.