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January 30, 2012

Marc Maltais, President
USW Local 9490
830 des Pins West
Alma, QC G0V 7R3

Dear USW members at Rio Tinto,

I'm writing with a message of our sincere solidarity in your struggle against this giant multi-national company. I was shocked and angered to see the arrogance of Rio-Tinto, who not so long ago, merged with Montreal-based Alcan, lock out nearly 800 of its workers on New Year's Day.

Our nearly 200,000 members of the CAW share in your frustration and anger at your employer attempting to turn good job into precarious, temporary contract jobs.

The Quebec government has even been complicit in allowing Rio Tinto to try to railroad Quebec workers. That the Quebec Superior Court would rule USW members must limit their picket line numbers is outrageous – worse still that the Quebec government, led by Jean Charest, has not intervened in this injustice.

Giant wealthy corporations have become emboldened by government inaction and ever weakening regulations and labour laws. I applaud your courage in standing up to stop this incredibly damaging trend.

Nearly 500 CAW members in London Ontario are living a similar experience, after their employer Electro-Motive Diesel (Caterpillar) locked them out, only hours after Rio Tinto did the same. Another multi-national giant, Caterpillar has demanded that our members accept an offer that would see their wages and benefits cut virtually in half. Like Rio Tinto, Caterpillar is a very rich company, and should not expect to extract deep concessions from its workforce, just to add to its profit margin.

Like you, the CAW is taking a stand and we support you wholeheartedly in this important fight.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ken Lewenza'.

Ken Lewenza
National President

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copy: Danielle Roy, USW Region 5 Director,
Ken Neumann, USW National Director for Canada