

Refinery Union Calls On British Petroleum To Resume Bargaining

USW 7-1 urges British Petroleum to return to bargaining, nearly 6mo after the London company locked 800 workers out of their jobs at the Whiting, Ind. refinery

WHITING, IN, UNITED STATES, September 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- United Steelworkers

“

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Eric Schultz, President, USW 7-1

Local 7-1 is urging British Petroleum to return to the bargaining table, offering dates for the sides to meet in search of common ground, almost six months after the company locked [hundreds of local workers](#) out of their jobs at the Whiting refinery.

On Tuesday, the union notified the London company of its willingness to meet with a federal mediator as part of their negotiations, in hopes of reaching a fair agreement. Before then, however, union leadership has asked British Petroleum to return to bargaining on Sept. 14 and 15.

“We are open to using federal mediation, but first want to make a serious effort to work through the issues that continue to prevent an agreement and determine whether we can make meaningful progress toward a settlement,” said USW 7-1 President Eric Schultz. “We remain prepared to bargain in good faith and work toward an agreement that addresses the concerns of both parties, while protecting our members’ jobs, wages and fundamental contractual rights.”

Should those sessions show the company is still unwilling to budge from its demand to eliminate dozens of local jobs, force hundreds of workers to take pay cuts and give up bargaining and seniority rights, the union is open to federal mediation as a next step, which the company has requested.

“Mediation could become another way to create the appearance of progress without actually making progress,” Schultz said. “We are not interested in another process that simply gives British Petroleum more time, while our members continue to go without paychecks. We want to get back to work.”

Earlier this year, more than 98% of union members rejected the company’s demand to cut jobs, wages and workplace rights. In response, in March, the company abruptly locked roughly 800

union workers out of their jobs. British Petroleum is now utilizing non-union workers largely imported from gulf states, who are unfamiliar with the inner workings of the Whiting refinery. Some have posted social media videos that violate safety standards and refinery policies.

Locking out hundreds of local union workers is one part of [the company's broader negotiating strategy](#), which was copied from previous negotiations at other unionized gulf coast refineries. Whiting is the last union refinery in the U.S. for British Petroleum, which has already delivered billions in profits to its shareholders in 2026. Still, their CEO has vowed to deliver even more profits this year.

The Northwest Indiana community has rallied around the hundreds of locked-out workers, supporting their families with food drives, donations and resolutions calling on the London company to end the lockout. More information can be found at www.supportoilworkers.com.

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