

August 10, 2021

Ambassador Lee Soo-hyuck  
Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the USA  
2450 Massachusetts Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ambassador Lee,

UNITE HERE International Union represents over 300,000 hotel, gaming and food service workers in the United States and Canada. I am writing to you on behalf of around 170 of our members at the Hilton Vancouver Metrotown, in British Columbia, Canada. The Hilton Metrotown is owned by Seoul-based DSDL, which is controlled by South Korean businessman Cho Wuk Rai and his family.

When the pandemic struck, Hilton Metrotown laid off most of its staff, many of whom are women immigrants of color. Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on the hotel industry, Metrotown workers urged hotel management and the Cho family to commit to returning them to their jobs as business recovers. Rather than work together during this public health crisis, the hotel fired 97 workers – including some who had been with the hotel since its opening twenty years ago. The hotel locked out the rest on April 15, 2021. Despite over four months of picket lines, protests, and a boycott by major clients of the hotel, the Cho family has shown no real willingness to end this dispute.

Hilton Metrotown workers have received strong support from the community. The Burnaby Mayor and City Council passed a motion to stop doing business with the hotel until they bring back staff. The hotel stands to lose millions due to a boycott by the BC Federation of Labour. Lufthansa Airlines, non-profits, corporate and union customers have canceled future bookings. The boycott has been extended to DSDL's three Edmonton, Canada hotels, and unionized workers at DSDL's hotel in Quebec City recently held a symbolic picket line to protest DSDL's treatment of locked-out and fired staff.

The actions of Seoul-based DSDL reflect poorly on South Korean business interests in North America. I ask you to urge DSDL and the Cho family to negotiate fairly, so that long-time, loyal employees can return to their jobs as business returns to the hotel.

Sincerely,



D. Taylor  
President