



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 3

COUNCILMEMBER KSHAMA SAWANT

July 14, 2016

Dear REI President and CEO Jerry Stritzke,

In recent weeks, many REI workers have reached out to my Council office to discuss working conditions at REI. Among their many concerns, they report extremely volatile work hours that make it impossible to maintain a stable income, limited paths towards full-time employment (even when workers make themselves fully available), and being denied cost of living pay increases.

It is clear to my office, from having discussed with a number of REI employees, that these conditions have persisted systematically for years, are commonplace, and have been ignored by management, despite workers repeatedly bringing their concerns forward to the attention of REI management. It is also evident that these conditions are not isolated to the Seattle location, but that they are experienced by workers at branches of your company all over the country. This is troubling, given REI's recent record revenue growth and the significant expansion of its membership by at least a million in the last year.

As I am sure you are aware, workers have begun to democratically campaign for change at the co-op. Nearly 1,700 REI workers, co-op members, and community supporters have signed REI Retail Employees for Real Change's petition over the last two months.

This Monday, July 11, REI workers and my office co-hosted a forum to educate the public about workplace conditions at REI. Over 120 people attended the event, including dozens of REI workers, and the labor movement of Seattle. At the forum, workers shared their real life experiences as REI employees. These experiences include chronic homelessness and lack of money to buy enough food.

The workers unanimously expressed a strong admiration for REI's mission, history, and culture as a co-op. They demonstrated a clear passion for their job and for their co-workers and customers, and a love of the outdoors.

Despite their obvious dedication, however, they have continued to face difficult conditions. They shared with the public their specific demands of REI: the introduction of a living wage, all their cost of living increases, access to predictable and full-time hours, and a path to full-time employment with benefits. There was strong solidarity from the attendees towards the REI workers.

I would like to schedule a meeting with you and anyone you select from your management team, together with members of REI Employees for Real Change and myself, to discuss how you plan to address the workers' grievances.

An equal opportunity employer

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Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Kshama Sawant

CC: REI Board Members Matt Compton, Christine Day, Kari Glover, John Hamlin, Steven Hooper, Steve Lockhart, Beth Newlands Campbell, Sharon Philpott, Bert Quintana, Cheryl Scott, and Anthony Truesdale