



City of Seattle
Seattle City Council

NEWS RELEASE

Councilmember Kshama Sawant

Contact:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Beatriz Lacombe, Office of Councilmember Kshama

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Sawant, (719) 648-2494

Councilmember Sawant Urges Solidarity with Striking Sand and Gravel Teamsters, Supports Mass Action to Win Strike

“In the face of stonewalling and attempted strikebreaking by contractor bosses, mass action is needed to win this strike. I appeal to all workers to refuse to cross the Teamsters’ picket line and to refuse to handle any concrete being used by the bosses to break the strike.”

SEATTLE - Councilmember Kshama Sawant (District 3, Central Seattle), chair of the Sustainability and Renters' Rights Committee, released the following statement in solidarity with striking Sand and Gravel workers in the Seattle region:

“My socialist City Council office, and my organization Socialist Alternative, stand unequivocally with our sisters, brothers, and siblings in the Sand and Gravel division of Teamsters Local 174 in their strike.

“The workers have been on strike for a fair contract now for over three months. Their courageous strike has slowed Seattle's \$23 billion construction industry to a crawl and is a reminder that the profits of the wealthy rest on the labor of workers.

“Some are saying that this strike must end, and workers must return to their job sites. Rank-and-file Teamsters also, understandably, want to get back to their daily lives. **But the principal question is: on whose terms? On the condition of a strong contract for the workers who build our city, or on the terms of the exploitative bosses?**

“It is the greed of the contractors and their refusal to bargain in good faith that has put projects on hold and thousands out of work. Construction companies are making money hand over fist, but they have refused to agree to a fair deal with the workers who actually build these projects and produce the industry’s wealth. Sand and Gravel workers are courageously fighting to better their conditions in the face of the eye-popping profiteering by big business. They are joined in this by workers across this city and the country, from Starbucks baristas to resident physicians at the University of Washington to educators in Minneapolis.

“I urge all labor unions and rank-and-file workers — union and non-union — to stand with our sisters, brothers, and siblings in Teamsters Sand and Gravel. **In the face of stonewalling and attempted strikebreaking by contractor bosses, mass action is needed to win this strike. I appeal to all workers to refuse to cross the Teamsters’ picket line and to refuse to handle any concrete being used by the bosses to break the strike.** The labor movement must rally behind the Teamsters with mass demonstrations of working-class solidarity.

“The outcome of the Sand and Gravel strike is of critical importance to the entire labor movement, and especially to building trades union members and workers. Construction workers, like so many other workers, are struggling with the pressures of inflation, skyrocketing rents, and inadequate wages, while a few billionaires continue to get unimaginably richer. Many construction workers cannot even afford to live in the communities that they help to build. **The construction bosses are determined to break the Sand and Gravel strike and enforce a substandard contract in order to send a message to all building trades workers: don’t dare to fight for what you deserve.** This is precisely why all working people have a great deal at stake in helping our siblings win a victory in this strike. A setback for the Sand and Gravel strike will be used by the construction companies to clamp down on future action by construction workers. Conversely, a victory would send a reverberating message to all construction workers and to the wider working class: when workers fight with unshakeable

solidarity, we can win. We need to rebuild a fighting labor movement on the principle of solidarity: that an injury to one is an injury to all.

“I have donated \$10,000 to the Sand and Gravel Teamsters strike fund from my solidarity fund. I take home only the average worker’s wage, and the rest of my six-figure City Council salary, after taxes, goes into this solidarity fund for worker organizing and social movements. I urge labor unions, progressive elected officials, and community organizations to donate as well.

“My council office has consistently stood with building trades workers fighting for a fair contract, including [operators](#) who went on strike in 2018 and [carpenters](#) who struck last fall. My office is ready to support the Sand and Gravel strike in any way we can, including by helping to build for a mass solidarity rally of Teamsters, other building trades, and the broader labor movement.

“Solidarity!”

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