

Mack Trucks workers vote 98 percent for strike authorization

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Workers at Mack Trucks plants in Pennsylvania, Florida and Maryland have voted in favor of strike authorization by a 98 percent margin. The vote is even larger than the 79 percent margin granted at the time of the previous contract in 2019. The contract covering 3,000 members of the United Auto Workers union expires October 1.

The vote shows the determination of workers to fight and not be sold out again, as they were in the 12-day 2019 strike. “Everyone wants to strike. Supervisors I’m sympathetic to, they’re all for the strike too,” said a worker at the Macungie, Pennsylvania plant to the *World Socialist Web Site*.

In 2019, the UAW bureaucracy left workers isolated on the picket line and starved on \$275 per week in strike pay. The UAW leadership called off the strike and accepted a contract that contained a 1 percent wage increase and met none of workers’ other demands, such as the restoration of pensions and the elimination of tiers.

The 2019 contract also ended with loss of double pay on Monday shifts or even any means for workers to receive paid sick time. Despite these massive givebacks to the corporation, workers at the Mack plant in Macungie have reported that the company regularly violates its own contract without any resistance from the UAW.

Since then, Mack’s profits have soared while workers’ wages have been devastated by record inflation. According to investment research site Macrotrends, Volvo Group, Mack Trucks’ parent company, net income for the 12 months ending June 30, 2023 was \$3.68 billion, a 4.56 percent increase year-over-year.

A January report in the Lehigh Valley’s *WFMZ* stated “Mack increased deliveries 13

percent in 2022 and the other truck brands increased 15 percent. As a result, net sales of trucks for the company grew by 35 percent for the year and adjusted operating income grew 32 percent.”

Mack workers are demanding the restoration of previous cuts and a large wage increase to make up for past wage freezes.

“I only make \$29 an hour now,” said a worker at Mack Trucks engine plant in Hagerstown, Maryland. “I have only gotten \$4 in raises in 16 years. That’s ridiculous.” The worker added that it “takes 20 years just to receive another week of vacation.”

Another worker at the Lehigh Valley Operations in Macungie said, “Essentially all I want is COLA back, and with inflation being more than 4 percent, a five dollar raise across the board.”

The young worker said they’d prefer to keep “benefits near the same,” but lower progression to reach top pay to three or four years. They said they preferred to have a “change in [contract] language so that no matter what happens, including another COVID-19 surge, if a year passes and you get a raise and with that a change of progression, anyone in those brackets of years gets automatically bumped up in pay.” Mack Trucks is guilty of using downtime and slowdowns in production to temporarily lay off workers, halting their progression to top pay.

At the same time, Volvo AB CEO Martin Lundstedt pulled in nearly \$51 million in compensation. “There are no executives at Volvo AB getting paid more,” states investor platform *Wallmine*.

“No person should be making that much!” stated a Mack Worker in Hagerstown. “The president of the United States doesn’t even make that.”

Mack Trucks in Macungie is also the workplace of 2022 UAW presidential candidate Will Lehman.

Lehman, a socialist rank-and-file worker, ran in the first round of the election on a platform of abolishing the UAW bureaucracy and transferring power to workers on the shop floor.

“I support my fellow Mack Trucks brothers and sisters’ vote to strike,” Lehman told the WSWS. He cautioned, however, that, “It’s important we build our own rank-and-file controlled organization to take the power from the UAW reps who continuously sell us out.”

“It’s important we fight to not only link up with workers at Volvo Trucks New River Valley plant in Dublin, Virginia, but also, the 170,000 Big Three workers in the US and Canada who have voted to strike and are fighting the treachery of UAW President Shawn Fain and the rest of the UAW bureaucracy.”

In 2021, workers at the Mack plant in Macungie, Pennsylvania built the Mack Trucks Workers Rank-and-File Committee (MTWRFC) to fight for a ban on the handling of scab parts shipped from the strikebound Volvo Trucks NRV plant.

In alliance with the Volvo Workers Rank-and-File Committee, the Mack workers waged a joint fight against the UAW bureaucracy’s efforts to sabotage the fight of the NRV workers.

Mack Trucks workers can contact the Mack Workers Rank-and-File Committee by texting 717-739-9517 or emailing MackWRFC@gmail.com.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact