



# ***How to Prepare and Submit Convention Resolutions***

## **An Overview of the Resolutions Process**

Each Agriculture Union Local has the opportunity to submit resolutions on issues and concerns to its membership for consideration by delegates to our Triennial National Convention. Once adopted, a resolution becomes the policy of our Union. So, after the selection of delegates, this is a Local's most important responsibility.

Indeed, while your delegates are the representatives of your Local at Convention, your resolutions are the voice of *all* your Local members in that they reflect their collective wishes, concerns and needs.

Four separate Resolutions Committees oversee the entire resolutions process. After the deadline is passed for the receipt of resolutions, the Committees examine all submitted resolutions, ensure they are in order and classify them into four subject areas: By-laws; Finance; Collective Bargaining; and General Resolutions. The Committees are allowed to combine two or more submitted resolutions into a 'composite resolution'.

Regardless of topic, Convention resolutions may be broken down into two broad categories:

- those that affect only the Agriculture Union and its members; and
- those that impact the entire membership of our bargaining agent, the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

The latter, after being passed by our own Convention, are submitted for consideration the following year by delegates – including Agriculture Union members – to the PSAC's own Triennial Convention.

One more point to note... The Agriculture Union has a number of Policy Papers and Resolutions of Record. Proposed Convention resolutions dealing with specific subjects and actions already covered by these documents will not be considered by the Agriculture Union Resolutions Committees.

Drafting a resolution is not difficult. However, there are some basic steps to follow. The closer you pay attention to these steps, the greater the likelihood your Local's resolution will be accepted by the particular Convention Committee.

### **General Points to Note Before Drafting Your Resolution**

There are also a number of ***extremely important technical requirements*** that must be followed if your resolution is to be considered for acceptance by the Agriculture Union Convention Committees:

The number of words in each Convention Resolution form section (a) explaining the reasons for your resolution and (b) the actions you wish taken must ***not exceed 150 words***. Bear in mind that your Local's Convention delegate(s) will have the opportunity to explain and expand upon the content of your resolution if it comes up for discussion on the Convention floor.

Each resolution should ***deal with only one subject matter***. If your Local has more than one issue to bring forward, submit a separate resolution form for each subject.

If your Local does submit more than one resolution, each resolution form should be ***separately numbered***, starting with 'No. 1'.

Each resolution form ***must be signed***, as shown on the form, by the Local President and Local Secretary.

All resolutions must be ***submitted in triplicate***.

Where a resolution is submitted by an Agriculture Union Regional Seminar, it must be signed by two ***Regional Vice-Presidents/Directors and/or Alternate***.

All resolutions must be sent to the Agriculture Union National office, ***postmarked no later than April 18, 2008***.

## **Introduction of New 'Clear Language Format' Further Simplifies Drafting of Resolutions**

Resolutions have traditionally been written in a formal and stilted manner employing such well-known phrases as 'whereas', 'be it resolved that' and 'be it further resolved that'. Most people have thought this 'legalese' serves little purpose, but continued to follow this longstanding format.

A welcome push for what is referred to as 'clear language' has gathered momentum in recent years. Its supporters' rationale is straight-forward: why make a document needlessly complicated or confusing?

In the past, the Agriculture Union National Office has provided our Locals with copies of a standardized 'Convention Resolution' form. This form was designed to simplify the submission of proposed resolutions.

Our Union's last Convention adopted a Resolution of Record calling for the inclusion of information on the clear language format in all future Convention Calls. So, this year, we are providing two copies of forms: one in 'traditional' format and one in 'clear language' format. Either is perfectly acceptable. However, one or the other of these provided forms must be used, or a resolution will be rejected by the Resolutions Committees.

### **Let's take a look at a model resolution, drafted in each of the two formats**

So, what is 'clear language'? It doesn't mean you have to write at the level of a nine-year-old! Do remember, however, that Agriculture Union Convention delegates come from a diverse background of employers, occupations and educational backgrounds. You want their support for your Local's resolution. Therefore, your resolution's language should be understandable to all members.

Let's take a made-up example to show how the form of each format should be completed. We'll use a highly-topical issue for the Agriculture Union at the time this document is written: the Conservative government's introduction of Bill C-39 and its impact on our Canadian Grain Commission members.

**TRADITIONAL FORMAT**

**TITLE:** Bill C-39

**ORIGINATOR:** LOCAL 999 – NUNAVUT

**LANGUAGE OF ORIGIN:** E

WHEREAS the Conservative government has introduced Bill C-39, *An Act to Amend the Canada Grain Act*, in the House of Commons; and

WHEREAS this proposed legislation attacks and undermines the historic role of the Canadian Grain Commission; and

WHEREAS Bill C-39, if adopted, would result in at least 200 Agriculture Union members at the CGC losing their jobs; and

WHEREAS both producers and consumers also stand to lose from the adoption of Bill C-39;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Agriculture Union launch an immediate education and lobbying campaign to oppose Bill C-39; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Agriculture Union prepare a comprehensive lobbying kit to be used by union activists to lobby their Members of Parliament in their constituencies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the National President personally write each Member of Parliament and Senator urging the defeat of Bill C-39; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Agriculture Union work with like-minded producer and consumer groups to oppose Bill C-39; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Agriculture Union urge the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the Canadian Labour Congress to support and join our campaign against Bill C-39.

Committee  
Recommendation \_\_\_\_\_

Convention  
Action \_\_\_\_\_

**CLEAR LANGUAGE FORMAT**

**TITLE:** BILL C-39

**ORIGINATOR:** LOCAL 999 – NUNAVUT  
**LANGUAGE OF ORIGIN:** E

**THE PROBLEM OR ISSUE:**

Bill C-39, *An Act to Amend the Canada Grain Act*, was tabled in the House of Commons by the Harper government in December 2007.

If adopted, this proposed legislation would gut many services of the Canadian Grain Commission and undermine its historic role of protecting the interests of both farmers and consumers.

Bill C-39 would also cost at least 200 Agriculture Union members at the CGC their jobs.

**THE ACTIONS REQUESTED:**

The Agriculture Union should launch an immediate education and lobbying campaign to oppose Bill C-39. This would include the preparation of a lobbying kit for use by union activists, a personal letter from the National President to each MP and Senator asking for their help in defeating the legislation, working with like-minded farmer and consumer groups and seeking the active support of the PSAC and CLC in this campaign.

Committee  
Recommendation \_\_\_\_\_

Convention  
Action \_\_\_\_\_

As you can see, both formats clearly lay out the issue and the requested actions. The 'clear language' version is less formal and more forgiving when it comes to wording. However, as noted above, either format is perfectly acceptable.

Please contact your Regional Vice-President or National Director should you have additional questions on preparing and submitting Agriculture Union Convention resolutions.