

# Information



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 27, 2011**

**EIGHT DAY HUNGER STRIKE ENDS WITH OFL INTERVENTION:**

**First bite of food comes with confirmation that oral hearing date will be scheduled**

**(TORONTO)** - At 2 p.m. today, and as a result of OFL President Sid Ryan's intervention, WSIB Chair Steve Mahoney met with injured worker Ippokratis (Jimmy) Velgakis who was on the eighth day of his hunger strike for justice.

Mahoney confirmed his earlier pledge to Ryan that an oral hearing date would be scheduled and further that key witnesses previously excluded would be part of the new hearing.

"We thank Mr. Mahoney. Jimmy is 70-years-old and was on the verge of becoming seriously ill. There is something terribly wrong with the process when the Tribunal cannot even respond to workers on urgent humanitarian grounds. We will be asking for a review of the rules so that no injured worker has to endure this kind of grim hardship," said Sid Ryan.

Velgakis took his first bite of a chicken sandwich to great relief and applause from all those gathered at his bench on University Ave. "They need to give justice not only to me but to all injured workers. Don't just throw us out on the street or send us to welfare. Too many of us lose not only our bodies, but our homes, our children and everything we have," he said.

"But now I am happy that they are going to finally do what is right and give me a fair hearing – not like the one before," Velgakis said.

Cheri DiNovo, NDP MPP for Parkdale-High Park, has worked tirelessly on Velgakis' behalf and was also present for today's meeting. "It's been utterly offensive to watch this. Jimmy has had to sit here day after day, enduring this terrible treatment. The Tribunal would clearly rather let someone die than reconsider its process."

Injured Workers Consultants' Community Legal Clinic spokesperson Marion Endicott, who has been at Jimmy's side throughout the ordeal notes that, "the Workers' Compensation Tribunal must give every worker a full and fair hearing. We are very pleased that the workers' compensation board has recognized that a new hearing needs to be held in this case and has stepped forward where the Tribunal has not." The clinic offers free services to injured workers.

**For further information:**

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