

Councillor, York Centre - Ward 9

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Eric Buitenhuis , Senior VP Operations Novotel, Canada
3670 Hurontario Street
Mississauga, ON L5B 1P3

March 31, 2010

Dear Mr. Buitenhuis,

I have recently had the opportunity to meet with a group of employees from the Novotel North York and the Novotel Mississauga, both managed by Accor.

I was disturbed to hear the stories of workers who were forced with reprisals at the hands of management. Those reprisals included the risk of losing their job security. As Chair of the North York Community Council, I am particularly concerned about the conduct of your management at the North York Novotel, which operates on city-owned land.

Ontario Labour Law

As you may know, Ontario law prohibits the threatening of union supporters, as well as the attempt to influence the outcome of a union vote by management staff. Workers who have recently immigrated to Canada, and workers of modest income, are particularly vulnerable to threats to their economic security.

I understand that Accor is facing numerous charges of breaching Ontario labour law before the Labour Board. Regardless of the outcome of these hearings, I wish to reiterate my expectation that employers in Toronto act in accordance with the Provincial labour code.

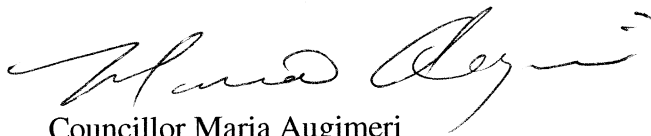
Accor's public commitment

I remember well when we first welcomed Accor as a well-known French hotelier to be part of our revitalization efforts at the North York city centre in the late 1980s. Accor had a reputation as a progressive, pro-worker employer, as evidenced by its well-known agreement on Trade Union Rights, in which it undertakes "not to oppose efforts to unionize its employees."

However, I have now seen an online posting wherein an Accor regional VP praised a member of management for helping “stave off four union drives,” as well as a copy of the letter distributed to Novotel Mississauga workers days before a union election, explicitly urging workers to “vote no.” I was very concerned to hear workers’ reports of reprisals that ensued after they became active supporters of the union drive.

The Novotel North York is a prominent facility in our city, located adjacent to the North York Civic Centre and built on city-owned land. I believe it is in everyone’s interest that Accor follow the spirit and the letter of the Ontario Labour Relations Act, and honour its own commitment to trade union rights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria Augimeri". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Councillor Maria Augimeri
Ward 9 – York Centre
City of Toronto

CC: The Honourable Jérôme Cauchard, Consul General of France, Toronto