

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Ambulance Service withdraws 'strike' claim**

VANCOUVER – The BC Ambulance Service has withdrawn its “illegal strike” claims against ambulance paramedics and their union, CUPE 873.

After three days of BCAS chief Lee Doney loudly proclaiming that paramedics acted irresponsibly and that patients were put at risk, the BCAS quietly withdrew its application before the LRB late this afternoon.

CUPE 873, Ambulance Paramedics of BC spokesman BJ Chute said “Lee Doney owes every paramedic in the province an apology for his unsubstantiated claims.”

The employer applied late Friday night to the B.C. Labour Relations Board claiming that CUPE 873 and some of its members were engaged in an “illegal strike” after several paramedics declined overtime shifts.

An emergency hearing was held by the LRB Saturday afternoon, but after several hours of testimony the BCAS withdrew its claim against CUPE 873 and the hearing was adjourned until today.

The BCAS had asserted that the union breached provisions of the imposed Ambulance Services Collective Agreement Act by booking off. That Act was rammed through the B.C. Legislature Nov. 7 by the Liberal government to force an end to the legal strike by ambulance paramedics before the 2010 Games.

During the seven-month-long strike, B.C.'s 3,500 ambulance paramedics were forced to work massive amounts of overtime under LRB Essential Services orders, masking chronic staffing shortages. They have consistently said the ambulance service has become totally dependent on overtime and that staffing must be addressed to ensure British Columbians get the best ambulance service possible.

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Contact: BJ Chute, Director of Public Education, Ambulance Paramedics of BC: 604.218.6169  
Murray Bush, CUPE National Communications Representative: 778.554.2234