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## **Library workers express disbelief, outrage as Timberland Regional Library sends layoff notices to nearly 40% of frontline staff**

*These layoffs are a betrayal of our communities and the library's values and will have far-reaching impacts on library services for people across our five-county region, says AFSCME 3758-B*

**Tumwater, WA** — AFSCME Local 3758-B Timberland Regional Library is devastated to share that on Sunday 3/15/26, library administration sent out 60-day layoff notices to 44 Timberland Regional Library (TRL) workers. All library workers who received layoff notices on 3/15 are “frontline” staff who work directly at local library branch locations in the regional library system. In addition, 17 library workers recently chose a voluntary layoff option offered by leadership, and will also be leaving library employment due to the ongoing, shocking budget crisis at TRL.

Layoff notices were sent to workers in the job classifications library assistant, librarian, and public services specialist. Local 3758-B is working diligently to provide resources and help to all union members facing layoffs.

The total number of frontline library staff who will be laid off by 5/15/26 from TRL is over 60 workers: over 38% of all frontline staff currently employed at TRL branch work locations. Union leaders warn that this drastic reduction of staff will weaken the library system's ability to respond to community needs, including technology access, education, safe spaces, and much more. Already, three rural library branches are now planned to operate on a locked keycard model without staff present, severely limiting those community members' ability to use their library.

Compounding the frustration of union library workers is that no additional layoffs or pay cuts have been announced for non-represented leadership, administrators, and other behind-the-scenes departments. As a Local 3758-B member says, remaining anonymous for fear of retaliation, “In difficult budget moments, workers expect solutions that reflect shared sacrifice across the organization, including consideration of leadership pay reductions before layoffs are implemented.”

Local 3758-B members continue to call for accountability in budget decision-making and forecasting from library directors that led to this budget crisis and the layoffs of frontline workers. Michael Rainey, Executive Director of AFSCME Council 2, says, “As a union familiar with public agency operations, especially library budgets, we are deeply concerned about how Timberland has managed its budget.” Despite overwhelming opposition to these layoffs from community members and library patrons, so far, the TRL Board of Trustees has made no moves towards providing accountability.

Local 3758-B President Meghan Hall shares this message: “Our union members are proud to serve the public. We serve our local communities and provide safe spaces for all community members to learn, use technology, and engage with literacy. Losing so many dedicated library workers to layoffs is heartbreaking. It is inconceivable that frontline library workers bear the brunt of these cuts.”

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