



For Immediate Release
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Capital Roots Board Stands by Employees, Rejects NLRB Proposal

The Capital Roots Board of Directors voted unanimously Wednesday to reject the National Labor Relations Board's (NLRB) proposed one-sided settlement of various baseless claims against the organization and will prepare to defend Capital Roots before an impartial administrative law judge. A material term of the settlement would force Capital Roots to re-recognize SEIU as the bargaining representative for its employees.

The Board took this action primarily in response to the wishes expressed by a majority of bargaining-unit-eligible employees who have told Capital Roots they no longer wish to be represented by the union. In May, these employees sent the Capital Roots Board a letter requesting that the Board withdraw recognition of Service Employees International Union Local 200 as their bargaining representative. Just as the Board acted at the request of rank-and-file employees to voluntarily recognize the union in July 2022, the Board is honoring the request of the employees who requested withdrawal of recognition. Employees have exercised their own independent judgment about their best interests, and it doesn't involve SEIU. Employees have made it clear that they do not wish to be represented by SEIU.

In a letter requesting that the Board withdraw its voluntary recognition, employees cited Sean Collins' and SEIU's lack of communication with them as well as public statements made by Collins defaming the organization and our outstanding CEO, Amy Klein, whose steadfast leadership in the face of Collins' unprofessional and unwarranted attacks has steered Capital Roots through the most challenging time in our 47-year history. Their letter described Collins' actions as "contrary to building community and deleterious to efforts to make a positive impact in the Capital Region," and continued, "SEIU has done nothing to instill confidence in their intentions to improve any working conditions within the organization and in fact has shown the opposite in their contempt for the current employees and the efforts we are making to improve the health and well-being of our communities."

In addition, a bargaining-unit-eligible employee has filed a charge against SEIU Local 200 with the NLRB, noting that, "Within the previous six months, (SEIU) has failed and refused to bargain in good faith with the employer."

"Respecting the wishes of Capital Roots' staff is extremely important to the Board. This informed our decision to voluntarily recognize the union in 2022. Our employees have since made it clear to the Board that they no longer wish to be represented by this union," Board President Anoush Koroghlian Scott said. "It has become apparent from the lack of communication with either Capital Roots or its bargaining-unit-eligible employees that Sean Collins is far more fixated on attempting to dictate the future of Amy Klein than he is in representing the best interests of Capital Roots employees. The Board will not disrespect the employees' wishes and sign on to the NLRB's one-sided settlement proposal that would force a union upon employees who do not want one."

Capital Roots is a critical resource for addressing food insecurity in our community. Our variety of programs, and the diverse populations we serve, are unmatched, thanks to the hard work of our team and our generous partners and supporters, who understand and appreciate Capital Roots' unique and essential role in the Capital Region. We look forward to returning 100% of our focus to the ongoing work of building thriving communities where land and fresh food empower physical, social, and economic health.

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Capital Roots is a 47-year-old nonprofit organization that nourishes healthy communities with over 50 Community Gardens, the Veggie Mobile®, Healthy Stores, the Produce Project, Squash Hunger and more. Capital Roots is headquartered at the Urban Grow Center, a regional food hub focused on urban agriculture and produce distribution to four counties, enabling Capital Roots to deliver local food and services to underserved neighborhoods and low-income families. Learn more at www.capitalroots.org.