

Meeting Note

Advice to Parliamentary Secretary

Date: February 4, 2021

Cliff #: 120578

Prepared for: Parliamentary Secretary Andrew Mercier

Date, Time of Meeting and Location: Wednesday, Feb 10, 2:30-3:00

Attendees:

- Andrew Mercier, Parliamentary Secretary for Skills Training
- Paul de Jong, President, Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA) (Appendix A)

Issue(s): Introductory Meeting and Discussion on Compulsory Trades with Progressive Construction Association (PCA).

Background:

- The Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA) was founded in 2000 with member companies employing more than 25,000 skilled workers across Canada and over 9,000 British Columbians in the construction industry.
- PCA works to ensure fair access to work opportunities for its members, by promoting legislative framework and industry practices that establishes a level playing field for all construction industry participants.
- PCA provides advocacy, labour-management advice, networking opportunities, and organizational services to its member community.
- PCA was represented on the Mandatory Certification Stakeholder Advisory Working Group (SAWG) by Rieghardt van Enter who is currently the Director of Stakeholder Relations at Tybo Contracting Ltd. and remains a member of the Working Group (i.e. Mr. van Enter's position changed halfway through the Working Group's work).
- The SAWG brought diverse perspectives and expertise together to recommend which trades could benefit from mandatory designation and to provide input into implementation considerations including compliance and enforcement and apprentice to journeyperson ratios.
- The Working Group has equal representation from 16 organizations from across the trades training system including: industry associations, labour, post-secondary institutions, Indigenous Skills Trainers, and the ITA (see Appendix B for list of members).

Discussion:

- As the uncertainty around the second wave of the pandemic increases, the skilled trades will be critical to supporting B.C.'s economic recovery from Covid-19 by building infrastructure stimulus projects.
- PCA's position on mandatory certification is unclear. Their communication with government is fairly open and supportive, however, public messaging is largely negative towards government and the introduction of mandatory certification in BC.
- PCA continues to raise concerns about the potential for mandatory certification to create additional regulatory burdens for small businesses which could impede their growth and viability. This concern is shared by the BC Business Council who recommends that "as the COVID crisis continues, government, should be very cautious about advancing new policy initiatives that add costs and/or complexity for business."¹

Key Messages:

- The skilled trades will be critical to support workers, industry, and B.C.'s broader economic recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic by building infrastructure stimulus projects and the eventual recovery of residential construction.
- Our government is committed to delivering accessible and affordable skilled trades training to ensure British Columbians get the education and training they need for good paying careers to participate in B.C.'s economic recovery.
- Premier Horgan has given me a very ambitious mandate, one that will rely on strong industry partnerships, particularly the implementation of Compulsory Trades.
- We are in the process of developing a comprehensive approach to industry and public engagement, ensuring system partners like PCA (and members) are provided with a fair and balanced opportunity to provide input.
- I want to assure you and your members that government's vision for Compulsory Trades is that it will contribute to a robust trades workforce that is ready to meet the demands of a strong, sustainable and inclusive economy now and in the future. I am looking forward to working closely with all the partners in the trades training system to implement compulsory trades.
- I would like to thank the PCA for their continued commitment to B.C.'s workforce and for advocating on behalf of issues that impact workers and businesses, especially small businesses in rural communities. I look forward to working with you.

Attachment(s):

Appendix A – Biography of Paul de Jong, President, Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA)

Appendix B – Stakeholder Advisory Working Group Members

Contact: *Bindi Sawchuk, ADM (250-216-0346)*

¹ B.C. Business Council, "The B.C. Economy: Recent Developments and Future Potential," January 2021, p. 31

Appendix A - Biography of Paul de Jong, President, Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA)

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Paul de Jong is the President, Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA). Paul has more than 25 years experience, taking leading roles in labour relations, government relations, strategic management, training, and legal issues.

Paul has served on several boards, including:

- Alberta Labour Relations Board
- Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) Health and Welfare Trust Fund
- Alberta Construction Safety Association
- Construction Owners Association of Alberta Respect in the Workplace Committee

Appendix B - Stakeholder Advisory Working Group Members

Laird Cronk,
President BC Federation of Labour

Jud Martell,
Representative for BC Building Trades

Rieghardt van Enter,
Tybo Contracting

Larry Richardson,
Director of Training -CLAC

Chris Atchison,
CEO - BC Construction Association

Helen Boyce,
Access Trades

Lisa Langevin,
Director, Women in Trades ITA

Kathy Kinloch,
President – BCIT

Ken Tourand,
President - Nicola Valley Institute of Technology

Kaanesh Ghosh,
Employee & Labour Relation Manager- LNG Canada

Irene Kerr,
CEO -BC Infrastructure Benefits

Abigail Fulton,
Executive Director - BC Construction Foundation

Ron Tremblay,
Chair - Automotive Retailers Association

Robin Lucas,
President - Allteck Power Line Contractors

Shelley Gray,
Chief Executive Officer - ITA ex-officio member

Ken McCormack,
Construction Labour Relations Association