



PCA Urges BC Gov't to Let All Construction Workers Build Public Projects

(Victoria, September 12, 2024) – The Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA) is calling on the BC government to take the advice of an independent think tank and scrap a regressive provincial labour policy that prevents 85 percent of BC heavy civil construction workers from building key public infrastructure projects.

“No government in good conscience should carry on with a policy that excludes good workers and contractors and forces taxpayers to pay tens of millions of dollars extra for public construction work,” said Dan Baxter, Regional Director, BC for PCA. “This government has more than enough reason to do a rethink.”

Since 2019, the NDP’s regressive labour policy has kept the vast majority of men and women who work in BC’s heavy civil construction industry from building many large-scale public projects, unless they join the government’s favoured Building Trades Unions. BC is currently the only province in Canada with such a policy.

A case study of the Cowichan District Hospital Replacement Project by the independent Cardus think tank, finds the province’s restrictive labour policy is “fundamentally flawed” and should be overhauled or replaced altogether.

The study, “[Benefits for Whom?](#)” confirms the Cowichan project “has seen some of the highest cost overruns among large infrastructure projects in British Columbia.” The project is now a whopping 63 percent over budget with a current price tag of \$1.4 billion.

Cardus finds that it was a “mistake” for the government to restrict the pool of workers and contractors on the Cowichan project and believes this likely exacerbated cost overruns. The project caused a great deal of embarrassment for the Eby government which was forced to grant an exemption, so that Cowichan Tribes workers were no longer barred from building the new hospital, on their own lands.

“It’s a terrible policy that raises questions about whose interests the NDP government is looking out for,” added Baxter.

About the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA)

PCA is a national association of leading construction companies that employ more than 40,000 skilled tradespeople, who are represented primarily by CLAC. Our member companies are responsible for 40 percent of energy and natural resource construction projects in British Columbia and Alberta and are leaders in building and maintaining many of Canada's capital and infrastructure projects.

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