



August 8, 2013

Honourable Thomas Lukaszuk
Deputy Premier
Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education

Dear Deputy Premier Lukaszuk:

RE: Promotion of Apprenticeship for Public Construction Projects

The Alberta Construction Association and Merit Contractors Association wish to respond to recent discussion about how to best promote apprenticeship in relation to publicly funded construction projects. This discussion arises from the 2013 Federal Budget and the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board "champions" initiative.

The combined membership of Merit and ACA exceeds 4000 contractors and suppliers that perform a significant portion of public construction in Alberta.

Promotion of apprenticeship is vital to the future success of our industry, and we can celebrate our joint achievements including:

- Significant industry and government investment in shared cost campaigns to underwrite apprentice scholarships
- Industry reimbursement of apprentice tuitions, in the millions of dollars a year
- Industry donations of supplies and equipment each year to our public post-secondary training institutes
- Industry volunteers providing direction to local and provincial advisory committees, and on the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board itself
- Industry funding and in-kind support to Trade Up Construction Careers, CAREERS the next Generation, Skills Alberta and other career promotion initiatives

Through our discussion, it became very evident that we lack sufficient data to determine what sectors, if any, are underutilizing apprentices for public construction projects. Indeed, the competitive bidding procurement model used for much public work suggests a strong incentive to maximize the use of apprentices. Some sectors such as roadbuilding of course feature few apprenticeable trades.

The attached proposal lays out an approach to help us more clearly define the problem, identify specific challenges and barriers, and collaboratively work to address those challenges.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss the proposal and work together on this file. Please advise a suitable meeting date.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K Gibson'.

Ken Gibson
Executive Director
Alberta Construction Association
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Stephen Kushner
President
Merit Contractors
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Attachment

cc. Honourable Wayne Drysdale, Minister of infrastructure
Ray Massey, Chair, Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board
Darlene Bouwsema, Alberta Enterprise and Advanced Education