



March 22nd, 2021

The Honourable Catherine McKenna
Minister of Infrastructure and Communities
PO Box 8777, Postal Station T
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Minister McKenna,

Canada's construction sector, which represents over 1.5 million Canadians, is concerned with the slow pace of infrastructure investments since the introduction of the *Investing in Canada* plan in 2017.

As you know, infrastructure investments are the backbone of a strong economy. In 2017, our associations were very supportive of the government's announcement of \$180 billion over 12 years through the *Investing in Canada* plan, however we have been advised by our members and their clients of ongoing and at times significant delays in project approvals. The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated that investments are behind by over \$2 billion and there are signs within the sector that the 2021 construction season will be negatively impacted as a result of these delayed approvals.

As the government finalizes the 2021 Budget and Canada's economic recovery strategy, we know that infrastructure investments are the best way to stimulate the economy and support job creation. The Public Policy Forum has found that for every dollar invested in public infrastructure, governments can expect to see a return on investment of two to four dollars. Furthermore, the *2019 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card* shows that there continues to be some urgency to addressing the infrastructure deficit in Canada.

Our primary recommendation is that Infrastructure Canada needs to lead the way in getting the construction of projects started and removing delays to infrastructure investments across Canada. This could include a rapid response stream for all types of projects introduced under the *Investing in Canada* plan with streamlined requirements and expedited approvals which would help to get projects started earlier and money flowing into the economy as soon as possible. The Universal Broadband Fund is an example of an effective and expedited program. It could also include bolstering resources at Infrastructure Canada in order to end the delays and accelerate project approvals or direct transfers through the Gas Tax Fund to municipalities. Whatever the mechanism, the delivery of infrastructure investments needs to be accelerated.

As you stated in your remarks to the Canadian Club of Ottawa on March 16th, every country around the globe will be competing in its economic recovery. This is why the government must deliver on its infrastructure investments now, so that Canada can continue to compete internationally. A successful and robust economic recovery will allow Canada to continue its plans to invest in transformative

infrastructure and leverage those investments for the long-term and sustainable benefits to all Canadians – not just economic benefits but also social and environmental benefits.

Every Canadian across the country benefits from safe and reliable infrastructure, be it new roads, clean water, hospitals, schools, parks, transit, communications networks, clean energy and beyond. The construction sector is once again ready to lead the way in supporting economic growth, but needs investments delivered to projects in order to get started. The time to deliver on previously-committed funding is now, so that Canada can emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic better than before and ready to tackle our societal and environmental challenges.

We are counting on your support in accelerating the delivery of infrastructure investments so that we can rebuild Canada's economy for the benefit of all Canadians.

Thank you,

John Gamble
President and CEO
Association of Consulting Engineering Companies – Canada

Brian McGuire
President and CEO
Associated Equipment Distributors

Mary Van Buren
President
Canadian Construction Association

Sandra Skivsky
Chair
National Trade Contractors Council of Canada

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