

To: Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities  
Hon. Anita Anand, Minister of Public Services and Procurement  
Right Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister

CC: Hon. Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance  
Hon. Jean Yves Duclos, President of the Treasury Board  
Hon. Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion  
Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
Hon. Bardish Chagger, Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth  
Hon. Melanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages  
Hon. Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development  
Hon. Marco Mendicino, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship  
Irek Kusmierczyk, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion

**Subject: Strengthening inclusive local economies through community benefits**

Wednesday May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Thank you for the efforts of your office and the federal government in responding to the Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. We applaud policies and programs that help ensure Canadians are safe and have access to income security, health and social supports during this crisis.

With the Covid-19 crisis recovery planning underway, we are writing to encourage the federal government to remain steadfast in its commitment to integrate and expand community benefit expectations in publicly funded infrastructure projects.

These approaches to infrastructure investments contribute to the federal government's environmental, economic and social policy objectives, while delivering world class infrastructure projects. Policies like the Community Employment Benefits (CEB) program are a valuable tool to create local workforce and business opportunities for Indigenous peoples, women, persons with disabilities, veterans, youth and newcomers. We also encourage the use of

initiatives like the Better Buying Plan (led by PSPC) which can support the participation of small, medium, social enterprises and non profit social enterprises in federal procurement and through supply chain diversity requirements on large infrastructure projects.

We were disappointed to recently see the dismissal by certain construction and engineering firms of Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) and the livelihoods they support. Most corporate leaders today understand that “Diversity and Inclusion” is a key strategy for future success, as well as an essential component of corporate social responsibility<sup>1</sup>. CBAs have been proven in many jurisdictions to increase much needed local labour supply and strengthen diversity within the industry, responding to key contractor concerns.<sup>2</sup>

In Canada, all levels of governments have adopted CBAs as essential building blocks to creating the inclusive economy that Canada stakes its reputation on. (See samples in appendix)

As a country, Canada will need an “all hands on deck” commitment to recover from this unprecedented, global pandemic, by building a “new normal” economy that fosters an equitable, more diverse, skilled workforce with a laser focus on addressing the climate emergency through low-carbon infrastructure projects, built with community input to ensure we maximize human potential and public resources.

Together as partners with a common vision to address the enormous challenges of the post Covid-19 economy, we welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your officials to discuss how we can strengthen the vitally needed collaboration across sectors to achieve these objectives.

Sincerely,

**Rosemarie Powell** - Executive Director, Toronto Community Benefits Network  
**John Cartwright** - President, Toronto & York Region Labour Council (TCBN Board Co-Chair)

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<sup>1</sup><https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/ca/Documents/human-capital/ca-en-human-capital-diversity-and-Inclusion-in-canada.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> A recent 2020 contractor survey completed by the Ontario Construction Secretariat (OCS) highlighted that the biggest concern amongst Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) contractors was recruiting skilled workers (74%) while meeting community benefits expectations on public infrastructure contracts was of minimal concern (20%).

**Liben Gebremikael** - Executive Director, TAIBU Community Health Centre (TCBN Board Co-Chair)

**Nigel Barriffe** - President, Urban Alliance on Race Relations (TCBN Board)

**Jeff Irons** - Vice President, IBEW Local 353 (TCBN Board)

**Victor Beausoleil** - Co-Founder and Executive Director Social Economy Through Social Inclusion (TCBN Board)

**Emmay Mah** - Executive Director, Toronto Environmental Alliance (TCBN Board)

**Merissa Preston** - Partnership & Business Development, LIUNA Local 506 Training Centre (TCBN Board)

**Adam Melnick** - Government & Community Relations, Insulators Local 95 (TCBN Board)

**Sarah Ali** - Co-Chair, Somali Workers' Network (TCBN Board)

**Daniele Zanotti** - President & CEO, United Way Greater Toronto

**Lorraine Goddard** - CEO, United Way Centraide Windsor Essex

**Colette Murphy** - Executive Director, Atkinson Foundation

**Sandy Houston** - President & CEO, Metcalf Foundation

**Michael Toye** - Executive Director, The Canadian CED Network (CCEDNET)

**Elizabeth Chick** - Executive Director, Buy Social Canada

**Mike Yorke** - President, Carpenters Local 27

**Marc Arsenault** - Stakeholder Relations, Ironworkers District Council of Ontario

**Steve Shallhorn** - Executive Director, Ontario Labour Education Centre



## **Appendix A: Community Benefits Samples from Across Canada**

**Metrolinx Eglinton Crosstown, Finch West and Hurontario LRT (Ontario)** - 162 targeted apprenticeships hiring, 170+ professional, administrative and technical (PAT) hiring from targeted groups to date, \$6M+ supporting local businesses and social enterprise, innovative clean energy backup power generator (Eglinton project)<sup>3</sup>

**Gordie Howe Bridge, Windsor (Ontario)** - Partnership between Bridging North America, State of Michigan and Government of Canada which includes a community benefits plan (Local workforce hiring, apprenticeships and training, investments in community benefits and local neighbourhood infrastructure)<sup>4</sup>

**British Columbia Infrastructure Benefits (BC)** – Pattullo Bridge Replacement Project, Highway 1, and Broadway Subway Project are BCIB projects providing access to career building apprenticeships for Indigenous people, women and people with disabilities.<sup>5</sup>

**AECON Joint Venture with Indigenous Communities** - Joint Ventures and partnerships with Indigenous owned enterprises and includes a 360° strategy which focuses on training and apprenticeships, employment and sustainable business development<sup>6</sup>

**Casino Woodbine Expansion** - CBA between City of Toronto and One Toronto Gaming, includes hard targets for local and equity hiring, apprenticeships and training, social procurement and \$5M for child care centre<sup>7</sup>

**City of Vancouver Community Benefits Agreement Policy** – A CBA requiring 10% local hiring and 10% local purchasing throughout construction and life time of the building on any rezoning application that exceeds 484,000 sq. ft. <sup>8</sup>

**Municipal Community Benefits Policies** - City of Toronto Community Benefits Framework (2019)<sup>8</sup>, York Region Community Benefits Framework (2019)<sup>9</sup>, Vancouver Community Benefits Agreement Policy (2018)<sup>10</sup>, Calgary Social Procurement Policy (2018)<sup>11</sup>, City of Toronto Social Procurement Program (2016)

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.thecrosstown.ca/community-benefits>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gordiehoweinternationalbridge.com/en/community-benefits-section>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bcib.ca/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://socialresponsibility.aecon.com/partnerships/indigenous-engagement>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/long-term-vision-plans-and-strategies/community-benefits-agreements/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-134595.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.york.ca/wps/wcm/connect/yorkpublic/c1297b58-9aee-48c5-951f-4c27aefb5f4/CBA-Toolkit.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=mLVV3ES>

<sup>10</sup> <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/community-benefit-agreements.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> <https://momentum.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Social-Procurement-for-Calgary.pdf>