

December 16, 2025

Honourable Bowinn Ma
Minister of Infrastructure
Government of British Columbia

Sent via email: INF.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Subject: Ensuring Fair and Open Tendering for Provincially Significant Projects

Dear Minister Ma,

On behalf of the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA) and our contractor members doing business in British Columbia, I am writing to respectfully request that your Ministry avoid imposing tendering restrictions designed to benefit a preferred group of unions as a condition for a project to be deemed provincially significant under the Infrastructure Projects Act. As the Government of British Columbia looks to advance critical infrastructure projects to meet growing needs, it is essential that procurement and labour policies support, not hinder, this progress.

The Act's intent to accelerate development and remove unnecessary delays is commendable. However, evidence suggests that restricting tendering will undermine these objectives by:

- Reducing competition, which drives innovation and cost efficiency;
- Increasing taxpayer costs through fewer bids and less market pressure; and
- Exacerbating labour shortages by excluding 85% of B.C.'s construction workforce who do not belong to a select group of unions.

Recent experience with major public projects delivered under the government's Community Benefits Agreement policy, such as the Pattullo Bridge replacement and the new Cowichan District Hospital, illustrates the risks of restrictive labour policies. Projects that use restrictive labour policies are cumulatively billions of dollars over budget and years behind schedule. These outcomes should be avoided under the Infrastructure Projects Act.

Open and competitive procurement processes are fundamental to ensuring transparency, fairness, and value for money in public projects. Restricting tendering risks narrowing participation, driving up costs, and slowing delivery timelines.

Notably, the Act will include rigorous criteria for a project to be considered "provincially significant" and thereby gaining access to an expedited review process, such as project readiness, financing viability, First Nations support, and alignment with provincial priorities like critical minerals and mining, energy security, housing, and supply chain capacity. These criteria sufficiently protect the integrity of designated projects without the need for additional tendering restrictions.

In conclusion, PCA recommends maintaining flexibility in procurement practices and focusing on collaborative approaches that uphold transparency while enabling diverse participation. This will help deliver the infrastructure British Columbians need efficiently and equitably.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. Of course, the PCA team would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss this issue and other practical labour solutions that can balance efficiency, fairness, and economic growth as we build our province.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Baxter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dan" and last name "Baxter" clearly distinguishable.

Dan Baxter
Regional Director, BC