

April 7, 2020

Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A3

Open Letter sent via email: justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca; pm@pm.gc.ca

Subject: Aid package for Canada's oil and gas industry

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

On behalf of the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA), thank you for your efforts to help Canadian families, companies and workers through the COVID-19 crisis. That effort, which includes billions of dollars in financial aid, should be extended in the same spirit and urgency to Canada's struggling oil and gas sector. As a sector that accounts for more than a tenth of GDP and employs tens of thousands of Canadians, it should be prioritized for immediate support from your government.

PCA member companies employ thousands of skilled workers across Canada, represented by the CLAC labour union. We are part of a construction industry that has 1.3 million Canadians on its payroll. That's almost eight percent of the country's workforce. Our membership is comprised of small, medium and large general contractors and sub-contractors involved in various types of construction including water and wastewater facilities, roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, housing and long-term care facilities. Many of our member companies also work directly in the oil sands sector, having constructed and maintained billions of dollars of critical infrastructure over the years.

No companies working in the energy industry are immune to the one-two punch of plummeting oil prices and COVID-19. Dozens of projects have been scaled way back, delayed or shut down. Thousands of workers have been let go — this on top of the thousands of jobs already lost when oil prices previously bottomed-out.

Those contractors who continue to build and maintain crucial infrastructure, are true leaders in worksite safety under extreme circumstances. Their aggressive hygiene protocols, staggered shifts and social distancing, make it possible for workers to stay healthy and return to the job each day. And just like front-line health care workers, they would benefit from expedited access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and priority COVID-19 testing.

Given the rapidly changing challenges that Canada faces, the federal government must work closely with the provinces to provide robust infrastructure stimulus funding. This should be earmarked for projects that are shovel ready and would provide the greatest benefits for our members, their workers and communities.

The oil and gas sector is critical to all Canadians. The current combination of Covid-19 and rock bottom oil prices constitute an existential threat to this essential industry. With expedited government support, it will continue to play a central role in our economy and will play an even greater role in Canada's economic recovery. This is a sector that has waited long enough for a strong show of support from your government.

Sincerely,



Paul de Jong
President
Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA)

CC: The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
The Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance
The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Natural Resources
The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities