



MAXIMIZING TAXPAYER DOLLARS ON PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS AND DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF BC COMPANIES AND WORKERS (2018)

ISSUE

In April of 2018 the Provincial Government formed the Transportation Investment Corporation, with the mandate to provide enhanced oversight, management and delivery of three major capital transportation projects: the Pattullo Bridge Replacement Project, the Broadway Subway Project and the Kicking Horse Canyon Project – Phase 4.

This mandate ensures that contractors who are signatory the BC Building Trades Unions (BTU), and their members will have exclusive access to working on those projects. Premier Horgan claimed that this process will result in the ‘best bids’ and that this process will maximize the benefits local communities receive from these projects as well as the number of women, youth, and indigenous people being trained and working on these projects. However, when such restrictive Project Labour Agreements (PLAs) are looked at more closely, we see that they can drive up costs if they reduce competition and unfairly restrict BC companies and employees from working on public infrastructure.

Furthermore, commercial agreements have become the norm in construction and all the benefits alluded to above can be realized while maintaining an inclusive, competitive bid process open to a variety of construction models, contractors, workers and unions. In order to maximize taxpayer dollars on public infrastructure projects and ensure that all qualified BC companies and employees can work on and benefit from these projects, an open and fair tendering must be the process by which governments tender public projects.

BACKGROUND

The BC Government has entered into an agreement with the BC Building trades that would give them exclusive right to represent workers on Public Projects. The BC Government has also instructed BC Hydro to build all future Hydro Projects using ‘Closed Shop’ or ‘restrictive’ practices, such as only workers with companies affiliated ‘Allied Hydro Partners’. That group represents less than 20% of the total construction sector.

There is significant evidence demonstrating that restrictive tendering, such as those

PLAs and Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) adopted by the NDP, can result in



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