

# Bill 80 gives workers more choice

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Murray Mandryk's July 8 column offers a confusing picture of the construction industry and Bill 80.

Mandryk laments that the Albert Street Bridge project in Regina is being done by an out-of-province contractor. However, the contractor won the tender fair and square. No one believes we should build a firewall around Saskatchewan, where only Saskatchewan companies bid on Saskatchewan contracts. We all lose with that strategy.

While the successful bidder may not pay taxes here, many Saskatchewan companies win and grow because of out-of-province work, and they pay taxes here. Our companies are competitive across Canada and around the world.

Mandryk suggests that the successful bidder on the Albert Street bridge project has not hired Saskatchewan residents. It is noteworthy that unionized contractors also hire out-of-province workers. The hiring board concept ensures workers are available from many sources, including out of province.

Mandryk suggests the Albert Street bridge project is leading to the "de-skilling" of our construction industry. The term, "de-skilling" implies that allowing alternate unions into Saskatchewan will compromise skills training or workplace safety. It is wrong to suggest that only building trades unions can provide skills and safety. Recent public hearings on Bill 80 heard no evidence that any alternate unions compromise skills training or workplace safety.

Bill 80 will provide greater choice for workers, should they decide to opt for another union to represent them. Nothing in Bill 80 compels workers to change which union represents them.

It's not the role of government to decide on behalf of workers which union should represent them.

Michael Fougere

Fougere is president, Saskatchewan Construction Association.

Regina

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