



SASKATCHEWAN PROVINCIAL BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL

Affiliated with The Building Trades Department, A.F.L. – C.I.O.

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Steelworkers Tell Government to Abandon Bill 80

North America's largest industrial union - The United Steelworkers – are calling on the government of Saskatchewan to abandon Bill 80 amendments to the *Construction Industry Labour Relations Act*.

"The government of Saskatchewan should abandon this Bill," said Ken Neumann, National Director for the United Steelworkers of Canada. "There is no pressing need to overhaul the current legislation, which has fostered years of rapid growth without any labour disputes in the province's construction industry."

The construction industry in Saskatchewan is healthier than it has ever been with an all-time high \$2 Billion dollars in activity and 37,000 people employed in 2008.

"The construction industry isn't broken," said Terry Parker, Business Manager for the Building Trades. "Don't Fix it."

The Saskatchewan Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council and its affiliate unions have rejected Bill 80 since the day it was introduced on March 10, 2009 with no prior consultation with working men and women in Saskatchewan.

"The government of Saskatchewan may wish to explore other options to facilitate different types of legitimate union representation in the construction sector," said Neumann. "If so, it should begin by meaningfully consulting the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council, and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union."

"Bill 80 has many flaws, the greatest of which is that it creates division instead of building consensus," said Parker. "We strongly believe that Saskatchewan works best when labour, business and government work together."

For more information on Bill 80, go to saskbuildingtrades.com

For more information, contact:
Terry Parker
306 359-0006

August 31, 2009

Rob Norris
Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour
Room 208, Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0B3

Dear Minister Norris:

I write in response to your request for "feedback from stakeholders that will be impacted by" *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2009* (Bill 80). We are concerned about its general implications for Saskatchewan workers and particular effects on the tradespersons who maintain facilities where many of our members work. We urge the Government of Saskatchewan not to enact this Bill.

You have presented Bill 80 as giving construction workers the choice to unionize based on workplace, rather than only permitting unions organized on the basis of trade. As North America's largest industrial union, the United Steelworkers union has always been organized on the basis of workplace.

However, we do not believe that Bill 80 would facilitate this type of unionism. In fact, your amendments to the *Trade Union Act* (Bill 6) have already made it more difficult for Saskatchewan workers to form unions.

By designating which unions can represent workers in Saskatchewan's construction sector, the existing *Construction Industry Labour Relations Act* ensures that construction workers have access to legitimate union representation. Such representation leads to higher wages, more benefits, greater job security and safer workplaces for Saskatchewan people.

Bill 80 would redefine "construction" to completely exclude the maintenance of industrial facilities from the Act. By also ending the designation of particular unions for all types of construction, it would enable contractors to bring employer-friendly "unions" into the province's construction sector. Indeed, your Assistant Deputy Minister has acknowledged that employer organizations and the Christian Labour Association of Canada requested these legislative changes.

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We object to the deregulation of industrial maintenance. We know from experience that the mines and mills in which our members work are safer when maintenance is done by a stable, unionized workforce.

Furthermore, maintenance contractors could be used to give employer-friendly "unions" a foothold in facilities whose employees are currently members of a legitimate union. Bill 80 would undermine union representation not only in construction, but ultimately in other sectors as well.

The Government of Saskatchewan should abandon this Bill. There is no pressing need to overhaul the current legislation, which has fostered years of rapid growth without any labour disputes in the province's construction industry.

One legitimate union, the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers, has expressed interest in organizing construction workplaces in Saskatchewan whose employees are not currently represented by trade unions. You could undoubtedly accommodate these aspirations without throwing open the floodgates to illegitimate unions.

The Government of Saskatchewan may wish to explore other options to facilitate different types of legitimate union representation in the construction sector. If so, it should begin by meaningfully consulting the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council, and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues further. Thank you for your attention to them.

Yours truly,



Ken Neumann
National Director for Canada



Steve Hunt
Director, District 3

cc: Clare Isman