



CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
BRITISH COLUMBIA DIVISION

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REGIONAL DISTRICT OF
NORTH OKANAGAN

Chair & Board
Regional District of North Okanagan
9848 Aberdeen Road
Vernon BC V1B 2K9

Dear Chair & Board:

There is no question that the rebuilding of infrastructure in Canada's municipalities is one of our most pressing issues. For that reason, as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has said,

All governments - federal, provincial, territorial and municipal - must work together and with the private sector to make immediate infrastructure repairs to protect public health and safety. They must act now to establish a fully funded, long-term plan to build roads, water systems, community facilities and transportation systems Canada needs to support businesses and families, enrich our quality of life and maintain competitiveness in international markets.

The Federal government has said it wants to work with municipalities and provinces to develop a long-term infrastructure plan. The Canadian Union of Public employees believe it is critical that municipalities play a role in designing such a program.

It is also critical that the federal government be discouraged from imposing a unilateral program that forces municipalities to privatize operation of their facilities and which is subject to change at the government's whim. This is exactly the situation municipalities face today.

Two prominent recent examples of this problem happened in Abbotsford and in Calgary. In both of those communities Councils sought funding from the federal PPP (Public Private Partnership) Canada fund for community projects. They sought the funding not because the community supported it or because they were enthusiasts for PPPs or as they are also called, P3s – they sought it because there was no other source of federal infrastructure funding. Funds for other infrastructure programs developed during the recession had been depleted and not replaced. "That money's all spent," Abbotsford Conservative MP Ed Fast told the Abbotsford Times.

Neither Abbotsford nor Calgary will receive federal funding. In Abbotsford the community voted by a 75% margin not to hand their water system over to a private company in a P3. In Calgary the community spent \$3 million on a P3 proposal for recreation centers only to have the federal government change its policies at the last minute to deny funding for such centres. Surely, given these results, this is no way to run an infrastructure program.

Regardless of what people think of P3s, municipalities must be given other options. On September 6th, 2011 the District of Mission, which had been involved in early discussion of a possible Abbotsford water P3, passed the following resolution:

Barry O'Neill, President
Mark Hancock, Secretary-Treasurer

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RESOLVED: That Council write to the federal government requesting that funding be made available for non-P3 water infrastructure projects to the same degree as P3 infrastructure projects, and further that a copy be given to Mission's Member of Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assembly."

We believe this resolution was an important development. We hope other municipalities will consider similar resolutions that go even further by requesting alternatives to P3 funding for all infrastructure projects, not just water projects.

If you are interested, we have attached a possible draft resolution which expands on the Mission resolution.

Another federal initiative that will limit the autonomy of local governments is the proposed Canada European Union Trade Agreement (CETA). The EU is insisting on full access to procurement from local governments. The Province, which has jurisdiction over local governments, has not indicated just what it will be giving up in the trade deal, including local government powers. It is time for BC to share the details of its "offer" to the EU.

Such an action would be one more power seized from local governments without their consent in British Columbia. Some local governments have passed resolutions on CETA relating to water. Again, if you agree we believe it is important to go further and a possible resolution is also attached.

The Community Charter says that local governments are a full order of government within their own jurisdictions. Actions such as only making infrastructure funding available as P3s and the giving up of powers through the signing of CETA will continue to erode these powers.

We hope that you will agree that the role of local governments for our communities is too important to have these powers eroded. We hope you will consider these resolutions.

Yours sincerely,



Barry O'Neill
President
CUPE BC Division

BON/LW
COPE-378

Possible resolution on alternatives to Federal funding of infrastructure through Public Private Partnerships

WHEREAS the Federal Government has indicated it wishes to enter into discussions on a new national infrastructure program, and

WHEREAS currently there is no federal infrastructure money available to local governments other than through public private partnerships (P3s), and

WHEREAS local governments should have choices as to the structure of the development of infrastructure projects and not be limited to public private partnerships,

THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED that council write to the Federal Government requesting that the federal government not limit its infrastructure funding for local governments to public private partnerships and asking that, in all cases for infrastructure projects, that local governments be given a choice of funding arrangements that does not involve a public private partnership; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be sent to the Union of BC Municipalities and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for consideration at their next convention as policy for those bodies, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be distributed to local Members of Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Possible Resolution on the Proposed Canada European Union Trade Agreement (CETA)

WHEREAS the Canadian government is close to concluding negotiations with the European Union (EU) on a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), with participation from the provinces and territories; and

WHEREAS the EU is insisting on full access to procurement by local governments which could significantly reduce the ability of local governments to hire or source locally or use public spending as a tool for economic development, environmental protection and support for local farmers and small businesses; and

WHEREAS government procurement rules combined with investment protections related to transit, water, electricity and other public services delivered locally may lock in privatization and make it prohibitively expensive to apply new regulations, to re-municipalize services, or create new municipal programs; and

WHEREAS local governments in British Columbia already have open and fair procurement policies;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council:

- Request the BC government to issue a clear, permanent exemption for BC local governments from the Canada-EU CETA agreement, and that it otherwise protect the powers of local governments; and
- Request the BC government to disclose what it is putting on the table regarding procurement, services and investment as part of CETA discussions, explain the impacts CETA would have on municipal governance, and give local governments the freedom to decide whether or not they will be bound by the agreement.
- Send this resolution to the Union of BC Municipalities, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and to local Members of Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assembly with a request that this policy be adopted.